

THE ORIGINS OF THE POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES
OF JOHN KNOX AND THE MARIAN EXILES

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1972



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SUMMARY

The thesis explores the source of the various forms of political action conceived by John Knox and other Marian exiles with relation to the governments of England and Scotland. It is suggested that the main source of these conceptions lay in the emergence of a new generation of deeply alienated and deeply idealistic Protestants in England and Scotland and in the impact of this idealism upon notions of politics. Protestants became politicized, dedicated to the elimination of social and political defects by political, and often violent, action.

The first part deals with the formation of this new spirit in the period before the exile. It is subdivided into two sections, because the process assumed significantly different forms in Scotland and in England. The first section explains how Scottish Protestantism acquired a sense of hostility and also of social hope as a result of persecution and an increasing awareness of its religious power in society, but also by exploiting the opportunities created by pro-English and factional opposition. Political authority easily became a part of this tension because native respect for it was comparatively low. Through involvement in the secular violence of Scottish politics Scottish Protestantism began to work out its hostility, a process which led to the St. Andrews insurrection of 1547 in which John Knox played a vital role.

Radical Protestants in England possessed a similar background of persecution and power - persecution resulting from Catholic attacks in Henry the eighth's reign, power from cultivation by the politically influential classes and the Edwardian regime. Like Knox they expressed a deep religious anger and cast themselves in the dynamic role of prophet. Their intense patriotism in a time of rebellion and belief that the moral standards of society were in disarray increased their social alienation. They began to fear the imminence of an overwhelming plague. Their relationship to the political order on the other hand was one of attachment - a result of the royal schism with Rome, the Protestantism of Edward's regime and an immense native respect for authority. The laws of England and their own public service sometimes seemed to radical Protestants to possess an almost autonomous secular value. But there was also a tendency to judge political phenomena simply in terms of their godliness. This sometimes resulted in protest, but it was only with the accession of Mary - a legitimate but ungodly ruler - that radical Protestants were brought face to face with their political ambivalence. In the meantime they sought to relieve their tensions and avert God's plagues by a royally-sponsored crusade, though their impatience sometimes drove them to imagine a personal initiative by individuals. The violent and drastic action they demanded was a significant anticipation of later Marian demands. John Knox, with fewer illusions about political authority, sensed the lack of potential for political action in England and tended to avoid political involvement.

The second part of the thesis deals with the period of the exile. After Mary's accession Protestant radicals were presented with new religious and national problems. The abrasive religious rhetoric of the prophets continued, but some radical Protestants bid for secular support by describing religion in secular categories. Others devoted an obsessive attention, almost ignoring their Protestantism, to the problem of Spain and did so in the language of Englishness common to the general community. Anticipations of these secular tendencies had occurred in the pre-Marian period. John Knox strongly opposed the influence of Spain and also French incursions into Scotland, but because of his Scottish background his interests tended to be more exclusively religious than those of English radicals. Whether problems were conceived of as secular or religious would affect the type of agents summoned to their remedy. Hopes grew of a new English Jerusalem, but also fears of a terrible catastrophe, expectations which increased the likelihood of Protestant militancy. English exiles began to focus their hostility on the Marian regime on the grounds of its violation of the laws of God and the laws of England. This combination of political idealism and traditionalism, despite certain indications to the contrary, also characterized the approach of the English Genevans. Knox's attack on the regime was speedier and his sexual politics reflected a kind of revolutionary purism, a rejection of ordinary laws, including laws of succession, and desire to institutionalize godly rule. Various forms of action were conceived - martyrdom, constitutional progress, rescue by God, prophetic

assassination and rebellion. Each of these involved in some degree a militant and political assault on opponents. And an easy volatility between each existed within the same individuals, suggesting a general potentiality for ideologies of rebellion within the radical group. This potentiality remained unrealized because of unresponsive circumstances in England and Elizabeth's accession. The types of rebellion imagined by Knox and English Protestants differed in significant respects. English Protestants sometimes exploited English xenophobia by secular ideologies. Knox preferred a starkly religious approach and ultimately grounded rebellion upon his own charismatic, prophetic power. In general, the new ideologies, with their involvement of the whole community in aggressive assaults on national authority, represented a significant advance on previous Protestant theories of resistance.

INTRODUCTION

This study deals with the origins of the political ideologies that emerged amongst English and Scottish Protestants with regard to their respective governments during the period of the Marian exile. These ideologies broke significantly with Protestant tradition. The bulk of earlier Protestant political literature had emphasized the duty of obedience to established authority. And those Protestants who had arrived at a principle of militant resistance had tended to do so within narrowly specified limits. The resistance by the Protestant princes of the Holy Roman Empire to their Catholic emperor, Charles the fifth, reflected not merely an existing political fact - their autonomy, but also an easily arguable constitutional and theological right. The princes were the electors of an elected emperor; as such, theologically, they existed within rather than outside the framework of the political world, of the biblical 'higher powers'. The position of the imperial cities who joined the Schmalkaldic League with the princes was only marginally different. They lacked the political rights of the princes in relation to the emperor. But their need was simply to establish a position of right out of the same reality of semi-independence. And this would tend to confirm rather than violate the existing political world: it would simply accommodate it to the new religious realities. The new

rights of 'inferior magistrates' could be officially authenticated by biblical models, but they seemed already self-evident from God's work everywhere and at all times in history - from his creation of variety and diffusion in political life. This sidestream in the Protestant political tradition, established in Germany by Martin Butzer and Strasburg, was continued in Switzerland in the late 1540s and early 1550s by Lausanne. Pierre Viret and Theodore Beza, angered by the religious interference of Berne, claimed that a right of political resistance was vested in authorities in semi-autonomous territories. Building, as most of these Protestants did, upon a foundation of existing constitutional right, their political aim was essentially protective rather than aggressive. They were concerned with the repulsion of invasions and encroachments, not with an out-going crusade against foreign idolatry. And they aimed not at the release of the independent religious energies of ordinary subjects, but at a control of enthusiasm in a limited war under traditional and legitimate authorities.¹

The Scottish and English ideologies of the 1550s emerged not within the confines of semi-autonomous regions, but within the context of large nation states. They therefore involved a new and deeper violation of the existing

1. Hans Baron, Religion and Politics in the German Imperial Cities during the Reformation, *English Historical Review*, LII, 1937; Hans Baron, Calvinist Republicanism and its Historical Roots, *Church History*, Vol. 8, 1939; J.W. Allen, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century, London, 1928, pp. 103-6; Robert D. Linder, The Political Ideas of Pierre Viret, Geneva, 1964, pp. 128-41; Robert M. Kingdon, The First Expression of Theodore Beza's Political Ideas, *Archiv fur Reformationsgeschichte*, XLVI, 1955.

structures of power. This violation was only made possible by the emergence of a new socially conscious generation of Protestants - a generation disturbed and embittered at many facets of the conduct and arrangements of society. Out of this alienation emerged dreams and visions of a brighter and more satisfying future - a time when enemies would be plagued out of existence or even a time of millenium established. As Protestant thought assumed a social, idealistic and revolutionary formation, it became increasingly politicized. The political order was subjected to the same anxious scrutiny as other spheres of society. It ceased to be an area of passive acceptance and became instead an object of alienation or commitment. It also became an element in the Protestant struggle. For in attempting to transform a polluted present into a more cleansing future Protestants increasingly became involved in violence, warfare and aggression. And in conducting this crusade they tended to enlist or alternatively to direct their enmity against the forces of the political world. For the Protestants of the Marian exile the regimes of England and Scotland became targets for violent attack. And to take part in this assault it ceased to be necessary to establish a legitimacy within the traditional political world: the main qualification for political activity had become the simple, but revolutionary one of godliness.

This much John Knox and many of the English Marian exiles had in common. But the differing circumstances of England and Scotland produced differences of outlook, and this study has been structured so as to facilitate a com-

parison between them. Knox and his English comrades were subjected to social stresses and tensions of differing kinds and they were involved in a creative response to different political problems. But in the almost simultaneous appearance of similar Scottish and English ideologies and in Knox's Scottish response to English problems in England and then on the continent wide areas of contact and interaction exist which make a useful comparison possible. By comparing two very similar but different 'embryos' it becomes easier to discern the interplay of circumstances and abstract ideas in the growth of each and to appreciate more clearly the nature of the forces which shaped the Protestant spirits of England and of Scotland.

In the pages which follow I have referred to these individuals as radical Protestants or occasionally, for brevity, simply as Protestants. By this I have meant not merely their affinity to various forms of Swiss theology, but more especially their tendency to adopt a wary and idealistic outlook on life. This has sometimes been taken as one of the central characteristics of Puritanism, but a much wider web of often contradictory associations and definitions surrounds the term and these make its usefulness in this context suspect. The 'Puritan' of this period was not in his usual peripheral relationship to the establishment: he was in the vanguard of Edward's Church - therefore in some sense a 'Puritan' Church. It is important that the present study be related to a wider context of religious life, but it is also important that it be examined and understood in its own rather than in foreign categories.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE¹

Several studies exist of the internal structure and development of the political ideas of Knox and of the Congregation. The most comprehensive of these are the works of J.H. Burns, P. Hume Brown, Lord Eustace Percy and Jasper Ridley. The issue of source and context attracted little attention until recently, but is now the subject of two doctoral dissertations - those of Wesley J. Vesey and Alan Main. These tend to confine the problem largely to an examination of literary and personal influences on Knox. Continental reformers may have averted an intellectual logjam on Knox's progress to political resistance; they may even have helped to suggest the possibility of resistance to some reformers; but we shall see that this possibility was in any case likely to occur quickly to many of the exiles. We are concerned here less with abstract ideas than with ideologies - with ideas in continuous and volatile interaction with circumstance. Any purely intellectual approach to the problem of origins is therefore impossible. It is clear for instance that the acceptability of political resistance to the exiles was a function of their new political alienation. And it is equally clear that the depth of this alienation tended to make resistance not merely an acceptable option but an almost obvious one. In this context the exiles began to produce ideologies that in their

1. For full details of the works mentioned below see the bibliography

radicalism often bore little relation to the ideas of the continental reformers with whom they were in intellectual and personal contact.

The emergence of a Protestant radicalism during the latter part of Henry the eighth's reign and the reign of Edward the sixth has been widely recognized, but most interest has centred on its theological and liturgical aspects. W.K. Jordan has recently emphasized the negativity of the movement - its anti-Catholicism and anti-clericalism. The violent rejection by Protestants of socio-economic change has been extensively dealt with by Arthur B. Ferguson and Whitney R. Jones. I have tried to draw attention to the linguistic implications of this protest. The Protestant 'cult of authority', a phrase coined by F. Le Van Baumer, has always been heavily stressed by historians and most recently by D.M. Loades. Several aspects of Protestant thought in this period - the ideologies of the Henrician exile, the nature of Protestant patriotism, the concern for godly rule, the new activist and crusading spirit of Protestantism - have been largely neglected. Knox's exile in England has received careful attention from Jasper Ridley and Peter Lorimer.

Though historians have shown considerable interest in Mary Tudor, in the domestic events of her reign and in the Marian martyrs, the Marian exile has seldom been the object of concentrated attention. Christina Garrett's biographies of the individual exiles are a basic and indispensable aid to the study of the period. Brief accounts of the theories of Ponet, Knox and Goodman can be found

in many standard histories of political thought and histories of the Reformation. W.S. Hudson has made an important contribution to our knowledge of Ponet, but by concentrating on the intellectual origins of his thought has failed to resolve the contradiction between his Protestant radicalism and the secular content of the 'Short Treatise'. By far the most interesting study of the political ideas of the exiles is Michael Walzer's brief chapter in his 'Revolution of the Saints'. Though in fundamental disagreement with its conclusions, I have found several of its methods of approach invaluable. Not the least of its merits is its acceptance of the emergence of an intense political radicalism during the exile. For much of the historiography of the exile has amounted to an attempt to absorb it into the Tudor continuum, in effect to treat it in terms of something other than itself. Particular interest has always centred on the liturgical disputes of the exile, the area in which it relates most clearly to the crucial issues of the Elizabethan period. Foxe's Book of Martyrs has attracted less attention as a historical document of the exile than as a source of Elizabethan millenarianism.² In the context of this approach to the exile Ponet and Goodman are something of an embarrassment. Obviously at odds with the overall Tudor tradition they have tended to be assigned to a separate and virtually unexplained niche. The Marian martyrs, by contrast, have

2. See for instance Christina Garrett, *The Marian Exiles: A Study in the Origins of Elizabethan Puritanism*, 1938 (my italics) and William Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation*, London, 1963.

presented few problems: they seem, rather misleadingly in fact, virtually to invite insertion in the Tudor tradition of political deference.³ This study accepts the newness of what occurred during the exile, but at the same time it attempts to show its relationship to and also source in the general tradition.

3. See D.M. Loades, *The Oxford Martyrs*, London, 1970

PART ONE

PROTESTANTISM AND POLITICIZATION

SECTION A

SCOTLAND, 1520-50

Chapter 1

The Religious Dialectic

For John Knox the true kirk made its appearance in Scotland in 1422 with the death of an anonymous martyr. Unlike his contemporary John Foxe in England Knox made no attempt to search the recesses of his nation's history to discover the origins of Protestantism, but his sense of religious time, if not epochal, was clearly segmented. He possessed a keen awareness of the early developmental structure of Scottish Protestantism. This structure could have been described theologically - in terms of the transition from Lutheran through Zwinglian to Calvinist theology - but Knox was more conscious of it as a political formation - a process of politicization, a transition from quietism to combat.¹

This section will explore the sources and nature of this politicization - a development which laid the essential foundations for Knox's ideology in the 1550s. It occurred as Scottish Protestantism progressively acquired an awareness of its place and potentialities in Scottish society and came to the realization that its social problems could be dealt with politically. Scottish Protestantism, as we shall see,

1. John Knox, *The Works of John Knox*, Ed. David Laing, Edinburgh, 1854-64, Vol. 1, p.5. Cf. William Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation*, London, 1963.

reached this position with remarkable rapidity, for secular processes stimulated and intensified its social awareness. We must begin, though, by examining the specifically religious factors that produced a development of social tensions and social expectations within the Protestant movement.

The first infiltration of Protestantism into Scottish society occurred in the 1520s when Scottish merchants in the Low Countries began to introduce Protestant literature and ideas through the eastern sea ports of the country. This movement, however, had hardly begun before a process of counter-reaction set in - a process which was both to speed the growth of Protestantism and transform its nature. In 1525 Parliament acted to prohibit Lutheranism and to curtail theological discussion.² This was only a modest beginning to what was to prove an increasingly expansive clash over the next thirty years.

The Catholic Church maintained a fairly consistent rigidity towards its opponents throughout this period, but the newness of Lutheranism made it expectant (perhaps naïve) and less conditioned to hostility. In any case simple prudence suggested the folly of making a frontal assault on the massive power of the Catholic Church: this would have been tantamount to an adventure in suicide rather than in martyrdom. In the teaching of the early reformer, Patrick Hamilton, anger at institutional Catholicism tended to give way before the joy and urgency of spreading the gospel. Hamilton's message was positive rather than denunciatory; and it was also individualistic rather than social. Because

2. Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland, Vol.2, 1814, p.295.

Hamilton never envisaged that he would have to wipe enemies off the face of Scotland he could concentrate on the core of Christianity - the new man - rather than on the ideological prospect of the new nation. His book 'Patrick's Places' hardly strayed from the solifidian theme of fundamental regeneration. Hamilton made it absolutely clear that a merely moralistic approach could never solve the basic problem of the human condition: 'The law saith, Make amends for thy sin. The Father of Heaven is wroth with thee. ...The Gospel saith, Christ hath made it for thee. Christ hath pacified Him with his blood.'³ It was an order of priorities that would be less than obvious to John Knox in his resurrection of the Old Testament Law as a means to the regeneration of human behaviour in society. Confronted in its positive evangelism by the stubbornness of human sin, Lutheranism in Germany often tended to capitulate rather than through the enforcement of a merely moral rectitude settle for a second-best. When guaranteed (unlike Hamilton) a rather stagnant security by the state it was perhaps doomed to remain the expertise (albeit joyful expertise) of a minority.

But Luther after all had ridden to power amid savage attacks on the Church and there was also a more hostile side to Hamilton's personality. His friends tended to speak of his fervour, not his gentleness.⁴ At St. Andrews before his martyrdom, though perhaps surrounded by kinsfolk, though the subject of an armed rescue attempt, Hamilton the disorganized individual seemed contrasted with the wiles of Beaton and his

3. Knox, op. cit., Vol. 1, p.25

4. Ibid, pp. 506, 508

paid informant.⁵ But faced with the personal defeat of martyrdom the whole fabric of passivity suddenly collapsed and Hamilton venomously turned against the 'messengers of Satan'. Also, after his piecemeal, localized efforts at reform, Hamilton seemed to realise as never before the danger and also the prospects for Scotland the nation. 'How long will darkness overwhelm this realm? And how long will thou suffer this tyranny of men?' he cried as the fire kindled.⁶ From a preoccupation with the conversion of 'darkness' Hamilton turned to a Knoxian paranoia about the 'kingdom of darkness'. It was a paranoia that produced more than a hint that Scotland's 'darkness' might have to be plagued out of existence.

Hamilton acquired a newly polarized consciousness at the stake. The antagonism between sin and righteousness in the individual soul became social and the resolution no longer a conquest over the Lutheran 'id' but a defeat of the Catholic enemy. In general also his martyrdom meant a new strength and a new perspective for Protestantism. It increased the bitterness of existing Protestants and produced a widespread disillusionment with the basic assumptions of Catholicism.⁷ This was hardly surprising, for Catholicism lacked the shrewdness to make repression a covert act. Hamilton's glossy show trial had been preceded by several days of free publicity in the public arena of St. Andrews.⁸

The martyrs who followed Hamilton, though mostly of lesser

5. Peter Lorimer, *Patrick Hamilton*, Edinburgh, 1857, pp.144, 151; Knox, op. cit., Vol.1, pp.15-6

6. Knox, op. cit., Vol.1, p.18

7. Ibid, p.36

8. Ibid, p.15

intellect and stature, exhibited considerably more defiance. Knox reported the emergence of a new frankness and openness.⁹ Hamilton's martyrdom thus released a longstanding undercurrent in Scottish life, first recorded by Knox with the Lollards of Kyle - contempt for the Church and its personnel.¹⁰ The Protestants of the 1530s tended to echo the vulgarity which was so much a characteristic of English Lollardy, displaying a coarse humour at the idiocy of Catholic practices like letters of cursing and at the illicit sexual behaviour of the clergy. They were prone to acts of defiance like spitting the articles of their accusation in the faces of opponents.¹¹ At the same time Protestantism gained surely but unobtrusively in strength - through martyrdom, through preaching and through the distribution of native literature like the 'Good and Godly Ballads'.

These religious factors helped to provide the groundswell for the ministry of George Wishart. Through wide experience in England and on the continent Wishart introduced a new culture and also doctrinal emphasis to Scottish Protestantism. He was an exponent of a sacrament of spiritual receptionism - a 'coenam mysticam' which made internal sincerity rather than Christ's corporal presence in the sacrament the condition of grace.¹² But for our purposes this was less important theologically than in indicating Wishart's acceptance of the new radical and impatient Protestantism of Switzerland. And by now, as we have seen, there were good indigenous reasons for Protestant impatience in Scotland.

9. Ibid, p.42

10. Ibid, pp.6-12

11. Ibid, pp.39, 42, 43-4, 47

12. Ibid, p.156; First Helvetic Confession, Articles on the sacraments, in Charles Rogers, The Life of George Wishart, London, 1876, pp.69-70. Wishart translated the First Helvetic Confession into English.

Wishart's manner was described as mild rather than austere, but his positive evangelism was punctuated with sharp bursts of rhetorical violence. John Knox remembered especially his denunciation of two friars in a sermon at Inveresk: 'O seargeants of Satan and deceivers of the souls of men will ye neither hear God's truth nor suffer others to hear it? Depart and take this for your portion, - God shall shortly confound your hypocrisy. Within this realm ye shall be abominable unto men and your places and habitations shall be desolate.'¹³ Wishart's social perspectives were advancing towards the conception of a social dichotomy between godly men and sinners. At the same time his thought moved naturally in the direction of the social outcome of the dialectic between these forces. His deepest insights advanced beyond the message of salvation and remonstrances to sinners to passionate visions of the fruition or calamity of the whole of society: '"This realm shall be illuminated with the light of Christ's Evangel as clearly as ever was any realm since the days of the Apostles. The house of God shall be built in it. Yea it shall not lack (whatsoever the enemy imagine in the contrary) the very cope stone." Meaning that it should once be brought to the full perfection.'¹⁴ This new sense of the national cohesion of Scottish Protestantism accorded naturally with the mobility of Wishart's ministry within Scotland. And as Scottish reformed thought became social and national in character it received increasing inspiration from the books of the Old Testament. Unlike the New Testament the Old Testament provided not merely axioms of social advice but a com-

13. Knox, op. cit., p.136

14. Ibid, p.133

plete social prototype - the kingdom of Israel. It provided the Protestant leader with a role - that of the prophet - and conditioned the content and style of his response to the problem of sin in society. Wishart verbally assaulted the ungrateful inhabitants of Haddington in the form of an hour and a half long prophetic tirade. The town would be plagued with fire and sword; it would be captured by strangers; and its citizens would serve their enemies in slavery or be chased from their dwellings.¹⁵ The new emphasis upon a dualism between sin and righteousness that was social rather than personal may have reflected the influence of continental radicals like Calvin who were coping with the problem of organising a godly society. But the indigenous need of Scottish Protestantism for a more social message and the satisfaction the Bible provided for this need were possibly of prior importance. It hardly required great ingenuity to discover the explanation of Scotland's social problems in the newly-circulating vernacular scriptures.

With its expectation of a bloody climax at the end of present tensions in society the Scottish Protestant consciousness had assumed a classically revolutionary formation. Wishart allowed his own social defeat to occur but his only alternative would have been to have ended his confrontation by flight. His martyrdom could only usher in an even more embittered phase. 'After the death of this blessed martyr of God,' wrote Knox, 'began the people in plain speaking to damn and detest the cruelty that was used. Yea men of great birth, estimation and honour at open tables avowed that the

15. Ibid, p.138

blood of the said Master George should be revenged or else they should cost life for life.'¹⁶ The Scottish Protestant mentality therefore operated increasingly in the sphere of social categories. With John Knox protest reached an intensity and pervasiveness that almost submerged his own positive statements and acts of faith. Knox's rhetoric matched the external circumstances of Scottish Protestantism. The murder of Cardinal Beaton - the revenge for Wishart's death - had set the Protestants in St. Andrews in armed confrontation with the establishment. It is possible, however, that Knox internalized this situation abnormally. He responded to the commission to preach by bursting out into 'most abundant tears' and for several days was in a state of almost pathological depression.¹⁷ Knox had never preached before, but he had engaged in public disputation. And though his new commission involved a drastic change of role - from secluded teacher to activist preacher - the extraordinary aggressiveness that followed his extraordinary diffidence may indicate a psychological peculiarity that even the tension-ridden situation and the problem of commitment to it cannot explain.

In a famous statement at the time Knox was said to have struck at the roots of Catholicism whilst others had merely snipped at its branches. This probably arose from the persistently metaphysical content of Knox's argument - his refusal to simply itemize the defects of Catholicism and tendency to reduce the Roman Church at every opportunity to

16. Ibid, p.171-2

17. Ibid, p.188

a horrific theological abstraction. 'We must discern the immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ,' he wrote, 'from the Mother of confusion, spiritual Babylon, lest that imprudently we embrace a harlot instead of the chaste spouse.....' The Roman Church, the last of four impious empires, was the 'Man of Sin', the 'Whore of Babylon'. Its blasphemous laws and doctrines were directly contradictory to those of Christ's true Church. In its attribution of justification to 'works of man's invention' - to 'pilgrimages, pardons and other such baggage' it was theologically offensive: the 'Babylonian Harlot' was a black marketeer in the merchandise of men's souls.¹⁸ Similar attacks had been made by continental reformers and also by earlier Scottish reformers. In Knox they acquired a new abrasive persistence, but it is worth noting nevertheless that orthodox apocalyptic reached a height at this time in Knox's rhetoric. The Roman Church was the 'last Beast' which had arisen after the destruction of four empires - the Babylonian, the Persian, the Greek and the Roman. Calvin, unlike German and Swiss colleagues such as Luther and Bullinger, had little interest in the eschatology of Daniel and Revelation. At St. Andrews Knox took as his text a verse from the seventh chapter of Daniel which recorded the action in history of the Beast and anticipated its destruction in a future time at the ending of time: "And another king shall rise after them, and he shall be unlike unto the first, and he shall subdue three kings, and shall speak words against the Most High, and shall consume the saints of the Most High, and think that he may

18. Ibid, p.188-92

change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hands until a time and times and the dividing of times."¹⁹ It is a warning for those who speak too loosely of Calvinist revolution that Knox launched the greatest Protestant offensive Scotland had yet experienced in a predominantly non-Calvinist idiom.

This offensive against the social repository of metaphysical evil left Knox little scope for moralistic side-glances at social behaviour in general. That would have to come later, after the Beast had been driven out of Scotland. Knox would have agreed with Sir David Lindsay's exposé of the life-style of the estates of Scotland, but he gave priority to religious reform as the only effective foundation of reform in 'manners'.²⁰ In England, by contrast, social change - the revolution of enclosure, eviction and 'rack-renting' - demanded Protestant comment. Scottish critics of oppression, like Lindsay's 'John the Commonweal' lacked the shrillness of their English contemporaries.²¹

Having identified the enormity of the evil in society, Knox naturally sought compensation in expectations of a more triumphant future. Protestant militancy - the attempt to bridge the gap between present and future - rested on these two essential foundations. In 1548 in a letter to the congregation at St. Andrews Knox developed the theme of apocalyptic hope. A time would return like that of Cyrus, first king of the Medes and Persians. The king, converted by Daniel, had restored liberty to the people of God, permitting

19. Ibid, p.189

20. See for instance Knox, op. cit., Vol. 4, p.447

21. The Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, Ed. Douglas Hamer, Scottish Text Society, Vol.1, Edinburgh, 1931, 251ff

them to construct a new temple of Solomon and to repair the walls of Jerusalem. Scotland - the 'New Jerusalem' - this never acquired a lasting plausibility for Knox, as we shall see in the next chapter. At the end of the letter Knox turned to a more negative and characteristic theme - that of prophetic terror. The threats of Isaiah possessed a terrible relevance for the ungodly of Scotland: 'Because they contemn the law of the Lord God he shall contemn them. Their hearts shall be indured; in the day of anguish and trouble they shall despair and curse the Lord God into their hearts. They shall be numbered to the sword and in the slaughter shall they fall....'²² But the emphasis was still on the dialectical resolution of the present in the future. Just as there would be a time of victory for God's people, so for the implacable enemies of the Gospel there would be a time of total defeat.

In his first appearance Knox's theme was obsessively religious and one-dimensional - that the cosmic antagonism between the true kirk and the malignant kirk had been domesticated on Scottish soil. One reason for this polarization of outlook, as we have seen, was the religious interplay and increasing equality between these two institutions over a period of twenty years. But the religious configuration of the late 1540s also took shape out of non-religious factors and it is these that we must now examine.

22 Knox, op. cit., Vol.3, pp.6-7, 10-1

Chapter 2 Protestantism and Patriotism: James Harrison's
British Apocalyptic and the 'End of Ideology'

Knox's outlook was richer than the religiosity of his rhetoric sometimes suggested. Involvement in various respects with the secular environment intensified but also complicated his responses. As religious tensions escalated Protestantism became closely associated with other elements of dissent and notably with pro-English attachments. The fifteenth century traveller who reported that 'nothing pleases the Scots more than abuse of the English' would have had to qualify his words a century later. By this time merchants on the eastern seaboard were increasingly anxious to cultivate English markets for wool and fish and together with many lords in the Lothians and Borders were weary of the destruction and stagnation caused by constant warfare with the English.¹ Between Flodden and the Reformation the nobility refused on three important occasions to cross the border to attack English forces. James the fifth's vindictiveness against the Earl of Angus and his faction was more than a simple assertion of royal authority against an overmighty subject. Angus favoured alliance with England probably because of his interests in the Borders. James' French marriages and attempt to rule Scotland through a clerical council eventually provoked an explosion of pro-

1. Gordon Donaldson, 'Foundations of Anglo-Scottish Union' in *Elizabethan Government and Society*, Essays presented to Sir John Neale, London, 1961

English sentiment. With the defeat of Solway Moss (1542), which ushered in the minority of Mary, Queen of Scots and the pro-English Arran regime, the collusion of Anglophile and Protestant interests became obvious. The absentees at Solway Moss included a considerable number of lords from Aberdeenshire, Angus and the Mearns who either had been or were to be associated with Protestant opinion.² With James the fifth's death Arran's regime committed itself to a policy of union between Scotland and England through marriage and, though its religious policy was one of Henrician Catholicism, as with Henrician Catholicism in England it was a question of releasing the brake but losing control of the train. Arran's preachers, Rough and Guillian, were clearly Protestants and the new licence afforded to bible-reading was virtually bound to lead to more fundamental criticisms of the Church. The return of George Wishart to Scotland in company with the Scottish marriage commissioners symbolized the conjunction of religious and secular interests. And like Wishart's ministry (a ministry in the pro-English parts of the country) Beaton's murder was more than a simple religious event. It came at the culmination of serious plotting in London and after the murder commissioners were dispatched by the insurgents in St. Andrews to England to seek military aid. Knox obviously preached to an audience in 1547 with more than the 'whore of Babylon' on its mind.³

Knox too had more than devils on his mind. It should be emphasized that Knox's consciousness was not encased in a

2. Gordon Donaldson, *James the fifth to James the seventh*, Edinburgh, 1964, pp.26-7

3. *Ibid*, pp.26-8; Knox, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, pp.95-206

religious shell and that ordinary secular influences impacted on him in important ways. There is no reason to doubt that he responded in 1543 to the new phase in Anglo-Scottish relations with the same enthusiasm with which he later recorded it:

'The fame of our governor was spread abroad in divers countries and many praised God for him. King Harry sent unto him his ambassador, Mr. Sadler, who lay in Edinburgh a great part of the summer. His commission and negotiation was to contract a perpetual amity between England and Scotland, the occasion whereof God had so offered that to many men it appeared that from heaven He had declared his good pleasure in that behalf. For to King Harry, of Jane Seymour ... was given a son, Edward the sixth of blessed memory, ... and unto us was left a Queen..... This wonderful providence of God caused men of greatest judgement to enter in disputation with themselves whether that with good conscience any man might repugn to the desires of the King of England, considering that thereby all occasion of war might be cut off and great commodity ensue to his realm. The offers of King Harry were so large and his demands so reasonable that all that loved quietness were content therewith.'⁴

It was extraordinarily difficult, however, for Protestants to incorporate this theme regularly into their ideology. The problem with Protestant nationalism in this period was not so much that it was defunct as that it was inherently

4. Knox, op. cit., pp.101-2

ambiguous. Seemingly the nation could only be served by betraying the nation. At moments of excitement and crisis the contradictory message of Protestant patriotism could become obscured and Knox's comments on the events of 1543 fall into this category. But what seemed to be an untarnished nationalistic ideology in fact completely conformed to contemporary English ideology. This too regarded the birth of Edward and Mary as miraculous, called Scotland to take regard to her 'commodity and profit', promised an end to destructive warfare and persistently described the proposed union as providential and 'godly'. But cajoling was combined with threatening. If the union of the 'elder brother' and the 'younger brother' did not take place peaceably it would take place by conquest. The reality of superiority could not be completely concealed beneath the hollow rhetoric of equality.⁵

England's possessive ideology could seldom be less than suspect in Scotland. With Henry the eighth it had become an English habit to demand of Scots that they view their situation entirely through English binoculars. In 1528 after his ejection from power by James the fifth the Earl of Angus was forced by Henry in return for a pension to tender his oath of allegiance to him, recognizing him as supreme lord of Scotland and as his personal prince and sovereign. The rapprochement of 1543 was accompanied by official propaganda setting out in historical detail Henry's claims to feudal sovereignty in Scotland.⁶ It was hardly

5. e.g. 'An Epistle or Exhortation to Unity and Peace' in the Complaynt of Scotland, Ed. J.A.H. Murray (Early English Text Society, Extra Series 17-8), London, 1872, pp.237-46

6. A Declaration containing the just causes and considerations of this present war with the Scots (London, 1542)

surprising that once the nobility had got over their initial flush of enthusiasm at the collapse of clerical and French domination and had taken a cool assessment of the implications of a closer relationship with England pro-English support quickly collapsed - perhaps more quickly than has sometimes been realized. Encouraging noises from all quarters, including Mary of Guise, and a staged escape of Beaton disguised from England the strength of the opposition until the end of the harvest and the campaigning season.⁷ In 1543 Angus's brother, Sir George Douglas, had referred to himself as an 'Englishman' and even after the disastrous Battle of Pinkie Angus could be heard commending England's 'godly purpose'.⁸ But whilst attempts had to be made to placate Henry's rage it is probable that Angus distrusted English control as much as he wanted closer relations with England. In any case expressions of support for England had now become dangerous, as Sir George Douglas explained: 'I have laboured with all my power to do the king's majesty service, and will do while I live, wherein I have always pretended outwardly the Commonwealth of Scotland, and spake not much of England, because I would not be suspected.'⁹ Scotland's Englishmen now found their ideology rivalled by a more respectable and less ambiguous Scottish patriotism. This found systematic expression in the 'Complaint of Scotland', which called for a national and concerted repulsion of the 'auld enemy'. The 'neutral' Scots who spoke with one

7. Arthur J. Slavin, *Politics and Profit: A Study of Sir Ralph Sadler*, p.94ff

8. *The State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler*, Ed. A. Clifford, Vol.1, pp.67-71; William Fraser, *The Douglas Book*, Vol.2, Edinburgh 1885, p.279

9. Sadler, op. cit., pp.67-71

voice to England and another to their fellow Scots were unequivocally denounced as traitors.¹⁰

Knox, if the record in his 'History' reflects his contemporary reactions, was probably less accommodating. He described the English ambassador's last-ditch conversations with Arran (one appropriately timed for April Fools Day) as attempts to recall the governor from his folly. The subsequent devastation that resulted from England's 'Rough Wooing of Scotland' was simply a divine plague for the rejection of the providential benefit of 1543. Knox's relentless pursuit of Protestant interests probably made him less sensitive to or less concerned about the possible effects of English influence than the secular nobility. Nevertheless in a period of devastating English attacks the triumphant English ideology of 1542-3 must have become a matter of some social embarrassment - an embarrassment reflected in Knox's account of the 'Rough Wooing'. Though referring on one or two occasions to God's anger against Scotland the normally judgemental Knox acknowledged his moral dilemma by confining himself to a fairly straight narrative of military events - events which clearly amounted to a savage and brutal attack upon Scotland. In recording the defeat of Pinkie the religious ideologue once again took over: the governor's unjust quarrel had now met with a second revenge. But in describing how the English forces in his home town of Haddington had been attacked by plague Knox's secular conscience at last showed signs of stirring. 'God begins to fight for Scotland,' he wrote.¹¹

10. The Complaynt of Scotland, op. cit., pp.182-3

11. Knox, op. cit., p.236

But even prolonged English aggression failed to dampen the pro-English fervour of some Protestants. The emergence of Edward the sixth's Protestant regime in England and renewed attempts to force Scotland into submission produced the most extravagant of the appeals for union - by the Scot James Harrison.¹² Harrison described the current conflict between England and Scotland as a civil war between two regions of a single nation. Despite frequent invasions by foreigners the majority of both Englishmen and Scots were descended from the original British inhabitants of the island. 'When these hateful terms of Scots and Englishmen shall be abolished and blotted out for ever', wrote Harrison, 'we shall all agree in the only title and name of Britons.' The great architect in history of a unified Britain had been the Emperor Constantine, who had established both a political and a religious uniformity: 'the two realms at the first were not only united in one Empire but also in one Religion.' Not merely was Constantine's Britain a precedent for a new union, but Constantine himself a model for its kings. The king of England wore Constantine's imperial crown and rode into battle bearing his religious ensign of the red cross. Constantine of course was to become a vital linch-pin in John Foxe's English apocalyptic and his fundamental prototype for Elizabeth's rule.¹³ In the epoch after

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12. Nothing concrete is known of Harrison. He could be the same individual as the James Henrison whom Mary of Guise, presumably as part of her policy of cultivating the Protestant party, later appointed Conservator of Scots Privileges in the Low Countries. See The Scottish Correspondence of Mary of Lorraine, Ed. A.I. Cameron, Scottish History Society, 1927, p.403 and n.1
13. William Haller, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation, London, 1963

Constantine, according to Harrison, Satan had been let loose in the empire by men 'issuing from the prince of darkness, brought up in darkness and maintained by darkness' until a new era had finally been ushered in by Henry the eighth. In the present time under a godly prince and an elect governor the nation would again exist in peace, wealth and order.¹⁴

Harrison's argument naturally lacked the sophistication and specificity of Foxe's. It was also an embryonic rather than a fully fledged apocalyptic. Despite its account of the nation's existence in time the vital last stage was somewhat anti-climactic, more a brief guarantee of a more peaceful and prosperous future for Scotland than a dynamic British nationalism. Foxe, steeped in Revelation, was to relish the final triumphant victory of the English empress over the Beast. Harrison's vision was nevertheless a tantalizing one, a suggestion that in different circumstances Foxe's elect nation might have become British rather than English and the 'New Jerusalem' a Harrisonian new Britain.

In the last resort Harrison's views were no more than an oddity of intellectual history insofar as most Scots would never have tolerated the type of union he envisaged. But his views and their timing were proof of the extent and tenacity of the attachment of some Scots to England. 1543 and subsequent events may have been a rude shock to Scotland's Englishmen, but English attachments must have continued to provide a vital extra dimension to Protestant dissent. However, most of the nobility could no longer afford to be

14. 'James Harrison, An Exhortation to the Scots' in *Complaynt of Scotland*, op. cit., pp.216-21, 210, 230

associated with it and with fervent Protestants, whether anxious or not about English pretensions, it probably ceased to be a subject of ideological militancy. It is hardly suprising that the Castilians were a 'rump' of lesser lords from an area of the country relatively undisturbed by fighting and that 1547 became an experiment in civic Protestantism. And whilst discontent about pro-French policies may have brought many of the Castilians to St. Andrews in the first place it was hardly surprising that they should have turned for confidence not to a discredited nationalism but to the ideology of an enraged Protestantism. For Protestant nationalism the 'end of ideology' (unlike Daniel Bell's twentieth century counterpart) issued not so much from a new consensus of attitudes in society as from a new awareness amongst the old partisans of the ambiguities of their ideology and also, in an atmosphere of intolerance, from simple caution. The extravagances of 1542-3 ceased to be respectable even to some of their former exponents and the British apocalyptic cast only a fleeting if fascinating shadow over the intellectual scene. But English attachments played an indispensable part in creating the context in which Knox could unleash and indulge his religious anger. At the same time Protestant rhetoric assumed an illusory simplicity and apparently severed itself from secular commitments. But the religious contradictions in Scottish society issued from more than religious factors and also, as we shall see, from more than loyalties to England.

Chapter 3 Protestantism and Profanity

Much of the support for a closer relationship with England obviously arose from simple considerations of individual interest rather than from identification with the larger interests of Scotland. And the pursuit of personal power and interest for its own sake rather than because of ideological commitment was one of the most important tension-making elements in the Scottish situation. In 1543 the English ambassador Sadler wrote 'There is one part which be called heretics, and the English lords, which is the Governor and his party. Another party there is, that which be called Scribes and Pharisees, which is the clergy and their partakers. And then there is the third party, which seemeth to be neuter, and be always better to take the better and stronger party, if there will come any business between them.' It has been said of Sadler that in his unflinching dependence on those most likely to support the promotion of Protestantism he became the victim of an ideological preference at a time when capital might have been made out of exploiting the factional antagonisms of his third party - antagonisms like those between Angus and Lennox, Arran and Lennox and Angus and Arran.¹ For by contrast with England Scotland's political life was underdeveloped. It lacked England's institutional richness, its nation-wide network of royal administrators, its common and codified

1. Sadler, op. cit., p.216; Slavin, op. cit. p.94ff

legal system. At times of royal minority - and this included the first half of James the fifth's reign and also the period after 1543 - political fragmentation tended to become rampant. It would be tedious to give more than a brief summary of the ceaseless manoeuvring and shifts of control at the beginning of James the fifth's reign. It reads like an interminable biblical genealogy. Angus and Arran replaced Albany; Arran and Albany replaced Angus; Arran and Margaret Tudor replaced Albany; Angus and Arran replaced Margaret Tudor; Angus replaced Arran. And at the end it was no triumphant prophet or messiah who completed the line but the perpetually insecure James the fifth, James only managed to retain control by an unusually vindictive suppression of the nobility. The council was packed with clerics and James' most powerful rival, Angus, driven out of the realm into the arms of England.²

These secular tensions had vital effects upon Protestant tension. In a country patterned with local enclaves of power centralized policies could often be frustrated. Knox indicated, unfortunately without entering into specific detail, that a long lull in the repressive activity of the Catholic Church during the reign of James the fifth resulted from the disruption caused by civil conflict. This process, however, could work both ways. Secular conflict could divert energies from the promotion of Protestantism, and Beaton for instance tried to split ideological opponents by exploiting personal enmities, as in the dispute between Ruthven and Gray over the provostship of Perth.³ But as soon as Protest-

2. Donaldson, *op.cit.*, pp.31-41; Fraser, *op.cit.*, pp.177-246

3. Knox, *op. cit.*, pp.53, 111-2

antism began to make a deep imprint upon the most powerful nobility, as soon as the 'lay saints' began to emerge, any Catholic regime in Scotland was bound to be faced with enormous problems of social control. It was only really with the 1550s under the stimulus of an escalating French imperialism in Scotland that this process began to occur. In the middle and late 1540s when most of the nobility turned in a general rejection of English pretensions Protestantism had to rely for its nurture upon lesser bases of power, but the itinerant ministry of George Wishart, an object lesson in evasion, is an example of the inefficiency of the machinery of control in Scotland and of the political scope which even relatively insignificant lords could enjoy. Both Wishart and Knox relied not on the nobility but on the lords of Fife and the Lothians for patronage.⁴

Some of the lords who exploited the political fragmentation in Wishart's and Knox's interest were probably committed Protestants, but the operation of ordinary secular interests could build up situations of tension which by inviting the participation of Protestantism could thereby accentuate and also provide a platform for Protestant tension. The classic and also historically crucial example of this is the St. Andrews episode of 1546-7. In part, as I explained in the previous chapters, this issued from religious and patriotic commitments. But even after making allowances for Knox's elevated standards in matters of personal conduct it is fairly apparent that the Castilians in many respects were little better than an unruly mob. And in the case of the

4. Ibid, pp.125-206

leader of Beaton's murderers, Norman Leslie, there are strong indications that personal interests were paramount. Leslie, heir to the Earl of Rothes (whom an official court of justiciary however exonerated of complicity in the plot) held the barony of Ballinbreach. Knox, in view of the importance he attached to his role, significantly made no attempt to label him a Protestant, as he did in the case of other Castilians.⁵ Nor does Leslie's record, except for this brief period, provide any evidence of an affinity to England. He had played an important role in the defeat of the English at Ancrum Moor in 1545 and died in battle in 1554 after distinguished service in the army of France, allegedly bitterly repenting his part in Beaton's murder. Moreover, he had previously granted a bond of manrent to the Cardinal and his annoyance with Beaton seems to have arisen only after a requirement that he surrender the lands of Colville of Easter Wemyss when the latter was restored to favour after a sentence of forfeiture.⁶

In the Reformation crisis of 1559-60 Knox was to denounce the self-seeking and self-interest that had polluted the Protestant movement, but the tension-loaded atmosphere of St. Andrews - the crisis mood that was so crucial in the formation of his consciousness - was in considerable part a product of these same factors. Protestantism in Scotland therefore exceeded its ordinary political potentialities and as a forced growth its political influence outstripped its deeper religious roots in society. For this reason Protestants

5. Knox, op. cit., pp.172-7

6. Historical Records of the Family of Leslie, Collected by Colonel Leslie of Balquhain, Vol.2, pp.46, 69-74; Leslie, History, Scottish Text Society, Vol.2, pp.291-2

in St. Andrews found themselves desperately short of professional talent. Knox's individual skills acquired a peculiar importance and in later years he never ceased to regard the quarrel with the 'kingdom of darkness' as not merely institutional but also supremely personal.⁷

On this accumulation of tensions Protestants built an essentially dualistic interpretation of society, expressed most drastically in Knox's sermon at St. Andrews. This was no self-destructive orgy of querulous complaint, for, as we saw before, Protestants looked eagerly towards the future for a time of resolution. And the anticipation that enemies would be defeated, despite its biblical idiom, was the product of a secular instinct as well as a biblical imagination - an instinct that included but was also more extensive than the particular context of St. Andrews. In the whirlpool of Scottish faction-fighting it was probably easier to indulge expectations of an imminent and catastrophic end to tensions than in the stabler society of England. And the secular factor which we looked at in the last chapter - Scotland's difficulty in maintaining an independent policy - was equally likely to produce expectations of this kind. In this respect Scotland fitted the biblical model better than England - a small and much-assaulted nation at the prey of imperialistic neighbours - neighbours who at times converted it into a battlefield for their rival ambitions. The author of the 'Complaint of Scotland' was probably voicing a common opinion when he came to the conclusion during England's assaults on Scotland that 'divine indignation had decreed an extreme ruin on our realm'. 'Ye may perceive

7. See below Part 2, Chapter 3

for certain,' he wrote, 'that ye have been scourged with all the plagues that are rehearsed in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, that is to say with pestilence, with the sword, with breaking down of our dwelling houses, with spoil of our corn and cattle.'⁸ Similar calamities must have been everyday features of Knox's life in East Lothian during the period of the 'Rough Wooing'. There was nothing extravagant or metaphorical about his prediction concerning the slaughter of the ungodly.⁹ On the contrary, there was a horrible literalness about it - a literalness which English Protestants in a differing secular context, probably never experienced to quite the same extent. And if the slaughter never materialized and tensions went unrelieved there was obviously every prospect that the godly in Scotland might decide to assist God in his vengeance. But before examining Protestant initiatives more closely we should investigate the extent to which the political order was incorporated into this overall structure of thought.

8. Complaynt of Scotland, op. cit., p.28 and also pp.24-31
 9. See above Chapter 1, note 22

Chapter 4 Protestantism and Politics: Actuality versus Ideology

A consciousness formed by tensions of such acuteness could hardly have failed to react in dynamic and dramatic ways to its problems. That is the point of the present study. If the bold political ideologies of the 1550s are to be understood they must be seen as emanations from a more total outlook. And the differing degrees and types of boldness of Englishmen and Scots fall easily into place once this broader approach is taken. Radical Protestants in England were not subject to exactly the same types of social stress that Knox was, but especially crucial were differences in political perspective. How then did Scots look at Scotland's politicians and political institutions? And if Knox's consciousness of society was dominated by the antagonism between godly and sinful forces, how ready was he to accept the existence of political sinners?

In England the new realities of Tudor centralization and the work of ideologists during the reign of Henry the eighth combined to form what has been described as a 'cult of authority'.¹ In Scotland political fragmentation continued unabated into the sixteenth century and kingship enjoyed a lesser mystique. During the minority of James the fifth the monarch became a tool of rival factions - a tool however of considerable value. The nobility continued

1. By F. Le Van Baumer in *The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship*, New Haven, 1940

to regard kingship with a certain magico-religious awe. At the beginning of the reign, when the Regent Albany tried to obtain possession of the king's person from the Queen Mother, Margaret arranged that James should be placed on the walls of Stirling Castle, crowned and with the royal sceptre in his hands, in order that it would be obvious that war was being carried on against the king's person. Several examples could be given of occasions when possession of the king's person contributed to the dispersion of rival forces. In November 1524 Angus withdrew from Edinburgh with several hundred horsemen after a proclamation in the king's name that he should depart and in 1527 it was possibly not merely the strength of Angus's forces but also the presence of the king that caused Arran's flight from Linlithgow. Soon afterwards when James was trying to free himself from the power of the Douglasses he feigned indisposition rather than be used in an attack on the Earl of Lennox.² All this suggested not merely a puppet king but also a talisman king. Oppositionist nobility respected the royal mystique and feared sentences of treason and forfeiture, whilst those in power both respected and exploited these assets.

However, the use of the monarchy as a mouthpiece by rapidly shifting factions was bound to reduce the credibility of the concept of treason. A situation in which Angus, the object of a declaration of treachery in 1515 and of a sentence of forfeiture in 1521, could turn these same weapons against his own opponents during the period

2. Fraser, *op. cit.*, pp.183, 206-7, 222-3, 228

of his own ascendancy reduced political values to rationalizations of power.³ Moreover, political respect tended to be forgotten when it interfered too drastically with political ambition. In January 1525 the powerful coalition of Angus, Argyll and the Archbishop of St. Andrews were denounced in a royal proclamation in terms that amounted to an accusation of rebellion, but the lords in support of the Queen Mother refused to enter battle unless the king actually suffered invasion by his subjects - a decision that set Angus on his ascent to power.⁴ Even though the royal presence could sometimes affect events, nobles like Angus were determined to allow the king as little political scope as possible.

Further, the political situation during a minority was more an exaggeration than a distortion of the balance of forces in Scotland. An adult king would obviously enjoy more independence than a minor, but it was difficult for the nobility to accept a more passive role. To break himself free of Angus James had to conform regal politics to nobiliar politics, relying not on the obligations of subjects in the general contractual relationship between King and subjects but on a specific contract with a specific subject - a private bond with John, Earl of Lennox.⁵ And when James eventually asserted his independence Angus set himself in prolonged opposition to the king, claiming however that he remained a loyal subject

3. See for instance the denunciation of the treason of Lennox and Walter Scott of Branxhane for their attempt to withdraw the king from Douglas control to their own 'evil ways'. Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, op.cit., p.312. I am indebted for help on this and other points relating to Scottish society to Mr. Michael Kelley.

4. Fraser, op. cit., pp.208-9

5. Dated 26th June 1526. William Fraser, The Lennox, Vol.2 p.226

and that his quarrel was with enemies who had supplanted his influence.⁶ This was more than a convenient excuse. It amounted to a refusal to believe in the possibility of any politics other than factional politics. And up to a point Angus was right, for James simply fell into the arms of Beaton, who nurtured the king's magico-religious awe for relics and shrines and, according to Sadler, exercised a psychological hold over the king.⁷ The emasculated nobility, who took a final revenge on the king by refusing to take part in James' war against the English in 1542, probably regarded James' kingship as pretentious.

These secular political attitudes were bound to be of crucial importance in the formation of the Protestant political consciousness. They combined with religious oppositionism - the encounter with a succession of Catholic monarchs and regents - to form a Protestant distrust of Catholic authority. In his 'History' (though it is not completely certain if this was his contemporary attitude) Knox delivered scathing attacks on the kingship of James the fifth, James was a 'carnal prince', an 'enemy to God's truth'. Seduced by clerical advisers, he was 'King of the Bean' - the joke king of a people's festival. Alternatively, he was Ahab with his false prophets.⁸ All this was more than ordinary Protestant opposition to a Catholic regime. It was of vital importance that when the orthodox Protestant ideology of godly kingship - that is that the authority even of evil kings was of sacred origin - began to impact on Scotland

6. Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry the eighth, Vol.4, No.4457; Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland, op. cit., pp.322-3

7. Slavin, op. cit., 68-94

8. Knox, op. cit., pp.48, 51, 84, 81

through media like the First Helvetic Confession it failed to find a complement in native political responses.⁹

There was lip-service, even a considerable amount of lip-worship to concepts like authority, obedience and treason, but nothing like an English cult of royal power. In England, as we shall see, politics and society tended to operate on different levels in the Protestant consciousness. In Scotland native attitudes made it more likely that the political world would have to stand up and be counted rather than claim a privileged exemption from the cosmic antagonism between the kingdoms of light and darkness. With the religious changes of 1543 Protestants responded eagerly to the opportunity to indulge their sense of Protestant political rectitude. Arran was 'honoured, feared and obeyed more heartily than ever any king was before so long as he abode at God.' 'The cause of the great favour that was born unto him,' reported Knox, 'was that it was bruted that he favoured God's word.....'¹⁰ But as soon as Arran stopped 'abiding at God' the whole fabric of respect collapsed and Knox went through the rest of his career bearing a grudge against Arran that was second only to his resentment for Mary Tudor and Mary, Queen of Scots.¹¹ An indigenous ideology of authority would have tended to curb reactions of this kind. It would have made self-seeking politicians objects of preferential treatment over and above other social enemies. The effects of this political fact were most evident in the St. Andrews Castle episode. Knox revealed that with the arrival of the

9. Rogers, op. cit., p.72

10. Knox, op. cit., p.94 and also p. 106

11. See for instance Knox op. cit., Vol.4, p.285, Vol.1, p.471

French galleys the Castilians prepared for a ~~seige~~ 'because they knew them no magistrates in Scotland'.¹² This certainly was a reference in part to 'assured men', many hundreds of whom are known to have taken oaths of allegiance to Henry the eighth and Edward the sixth to protect themselves from continuous English assaults on the country.¹³ Nothing could be a greater testimony than the existence of this fifth column to the secular weakness of political authority in Scotland. And whether or not Knox agreed with the political apology of the Castilians, secular politics had certainly put a new bite into his political perspectives, for he was now part of an organized movement in opposition to the council and Governor.

If kings and rulers were so obviously a part of the Protestant panorama of sin in Scotland, it could hardly be doubted that vengeance would be enacted on them too when the time of retribution came. Knox omitted to pronounce on this issue in 1548, but a decade earlier Alexander Alane had made a highly suggestive statement to this effect. Alane had fled to England in the 1530s and having tried out his Protestantism in parliament at Cromwell's encouragement was justifiably frightened by his reception. Not content with denouncing the wickedness of England's religious laws (something which English Protestants still found it hard to do in as many words even in the 1540s) Alane delivered an unmistakable warning about the fate of royal persecutors:

'In the twenty second (chapter) of Deuteronomy the king is commended to have always in his hands and in his

12. Knox, op. cit., Vol.1, p.203

13. M.H. Merriman, 'The Assured Scots', Scottish Historical Review, Vol.47, 1968, pp.10-34

sight the book of the law and to read out of it all the days of his life, for this purpose to fear his Lord God. And for his study and diligence this promise is made to Him - that he should live long and that his kingdom should be given to many of his progeny and lineage. And would to God that all Christian kings and princes would think surely the reading of holy books of Scripture a part of their office, not to read them in Latin, which they understand not, but to read it as they may understand the will of God, how He will be feared by His word only and not by any popish laws and man's traditions. And if they would do thus I durst surely warrant them both that they should live longer and also that they should have less tumult and sedition in their life time. For now, seeing they play the tyrants over the Scripture and over the readers of it, it is no marvel that God doth punish them for their cruelty and that there be few of them but that die some shameful and cruel death, for such is the end of tyrants wont to be. Jehoiachin, king of Judah, saw all his sons headed and he himself (his eyes before put out) was bound and led prisoner into Babylon, and it was said openly unto him: Because thou hast burnt the book of Jeremiah there shall be none left of thy seed which shall sit upon the throne of David, and thy carcase shall be cast out into the heat in the day time and into the frost in the night time. Antiochus which commanded the holy books of Scripture to be burnt perished miserably in desperation and through a marvellous fall. Both Daniel and Paul do testify

that he was the figure of the last Antichrist that ever should be.¹⁴

No English Protestant in the 1530s showed himself capable of a similar frankness. Alane concluded on an apocalyptic note that came perilously close to identifying the contemporary kings of England and Scotland with the 'last Antichrist' vanquished by God in the final pre-millennial struggle. For Alane his threats were partly a technique to shock persecutors like Henry the eighth and James the fifth, but, failing this, they described a future which could only be regarded as inevitable and might even be relished. And if the future was to be relished, or at least commended as just, there was every reason to make sure it materialized. It was in expectations like Alane's that the seeds of regicide were nurtured.

14. Alexander Alane, *Of the Authority of the Word of God against the Bishop of London*, 1537?, fol. C1-7

Chapter 5 From Martyrdom to Militancy: The Failure of
Civic Protestantism

Thus in the course of little more than twenty years Protestant perspectives on society were drastically altered. It will have become apparent by now that these perspectives suggested certain patterns of behaviour and forms of action and I shall attempt to examine the nature of these in the present chapter. But in reacting to their situation or in planning solutions Protestants also responded in ways that ideologies or conventions suggested that it was proper or productive to act. In this respect Protestant and biblical presuppositions about Christian action were naturally available to Protestants as guidelines, but it was possible also for the ordinary indigenous dynamics of Scottish society to be equally inspiring.

Protestant strategy was not seriously affected by native forms of action until George Wishart's ministry. Patrick Hamilton's policy, or lack of it, evolved naturally from his asocial career. His basic policy was simply his ministry - the creation of empathy between individual and group, between individual and individual, and especially between individual and God. When the Church challenged him something new was needed of Hamilton, but the possibility of a reciprocal challenge was ruled out. Hamilton the individual encountered the institution and though different options were open to him they were virtually bound to be passive or at the most reformist. Not merely his current position - a

'lamb amongst the wolves' as Knox put it - but the whole nature of his career ruled out an aggressive and censorious attack upon the Church.¹ If Hamilton had possessed the later reformers' sense of the unflinchable rigour of the Church, he might have evaded Beaton's invitation. Or he might have gone to St. Andrews determined to glorify Protestantism by a courageous exit from the world. But though Hamilton could hardly have been blind to the possibility of martyrdom he probably went to St. Andrews with a different mission - the conversion of the Catholic Church. St. Andrews was not a battle for Hamilton: it was more an important promotion in an evangelical career. Even at his trial he was still trying to make Knox's Church of the reprobate save itself. He admitted the validity of the first seven articles submitted to him by Beaton, which dealt with the issue of justification by faith rather than by works, but then quibbled over the last five, which denied auricular confession, penance and purgatory, described the Pope as Antichrist and asserted the priesthood of believers.² These were debatable points and Hamilton wanted the debate to continue. But they were not debatable points among Protestants at Wittenburg, where Hamilton had won considerable acclaim. Hamilton had probably decided that if he could not have a total Protestantism he would settle for the time-being for a semi-Protestantism - a compromise solution which would have been unthinkable for Wishart and Knox. Hamilton's Church would probably have had a hybrid theology like that suggested by moderate Catholics like John Gropper in Germany

1. Knox, op. cit., p.16

2. John Spottiswood, The History of the Church of Scotland, London, 1655, p.63

in the 1530s - a theology of 'double justification' involving the retention of the Catholic sacramental structure, but the reception of each sacrament in faith.³ Even the unequivocally Protestant 'Patrick's Places' could have provided hope for such a solution. Phrases like 'Christ is our sanctification' offered a terminology more obviously acceptable to Catholics than Protestants.⁴ But most of this must have been hidden from Hamilton, who probably played the situation instinctively rather than in relation to a consistent strategy.

We have seen how with George Wishart Protestant thought began to evolve out of Christian evangelism and into a more revolutionary formation. Wishart's strategy emerged from these differing perspectives and reflected the tension between them. Broadly speaking, it was the tension between martyrdom and social endeavour. Wishart did not sit on a strategic fence by choice: rather he was impaled on it by force of circumstances. He operated at a lower dialectical level than many near-contemporary English Protestants, who having thrown all their efforts into a struggle with Catholicism and social immorality were prepared to suffer a temporary exile in 1553 rather than risk martyrdom and an end to social confrontation.⁵ Wishart lacked a power base from which he could give his animosities full rein and found himself caught in a horrible spiralling scale of tension as the

3. Maurice Taylor, 'The Conflicting Doctrines of the Scottish Reformation' in *Essays on the Scottish Reformation, 1513-1625*, Ed. D. McRoberts, Glasgow, 1962, p.253. Scottish Catholics were eventually brought to this exigency in Richard Marshall's *Catechism of 1552*.

4. Knox, op. cit., p.24

5. See below Part 2, Chapter 6

Catholic Church slowly stretched out its tentacles. And because he had made his priority positive evangelism rather than an obsessive hostility towards Catholicism any question of flight was impossible. In the middle of a productive ministry it would have seemed tantamount to a betrayal of God's cause. Wishart's developing revolutionary consciousness never succeeded in submerging the demands of his ordinary ministry and therefore he could never view flight and exile in terms of their strategic value. Wishart could not decide to postpone the battle because he had never been fully in the battle. As such, his strategy reflected the ambiguities of his position. It might be described as conditional martyrdom. Because he had fewer illusions than Hamilton about the Catholic Church, Wishart began to accept the virtual inevitability of his own martyrdom from the start and reluctantly prepared himself psychologically for it. Knox described a 'Garden of Gethsemane' scene in which Wishart after 'many sobs and deep groans' fell on his knees and then on his face in weeping and prayer. It was only towards the end of his life when enemies were closing in that he approached anything like complete reconciliation to his future role. Before this he had tended to display a kind of morbid pessimism, asking 'What differ I from a dead man except that I eat and drink?' But since circumstances had trapped Wishart into a single and unsavoury strategic option he increasingly desired to act it out as quickly as possible. He 'wearied of the world' and 'desired earnestly to sleep'. However, at the same time he consoled himself with the belief that it was not the option which his successors would have to face. It would not be long before the Church in Scotland was brought to full perfection

and martyrdom was only an interim inconvenience: 'There shall not many suffer after me till that the glory of God shall evidently appear.....' And through his policy of conditional martyrdom Wishart helped to deter that most reluctant of potential martyrs, Knox, from carrying his loyalty to him to its apparently logical conclusion: 'One is sufficient for one sacrifice,' he told him, as Knox tried to follow him into captivity.⁶

Wishart was strategically schizophrenic, but Knox imparted a new single-mindedness to the movement by discarding Wishart's passive half in favour of his more militant half. Wishart's political militancy was never overt, but it was more clearly implied in his developing belief in a victory without martyrs. When it became clear that the Catholic Church would not concede power without a struggle, the denunciations and idealism of which Wishart had already proved himself capable would probably have become more central to his outlook and also as a consequence a more aggressive policy towards the enemy. Thus whilst Wishart perished on the stake of his ambiguities it was only natural that with Knox they should be exorcised. The enemy no longer had to compete for attention with Protestant doctrine: all eyes became focussed on the Beast and every mind anticipated His calamitous defeat. As a result a new activist stage emerged, though Protestantism did not entirely rid itself of contradictions in policy. Political duty did not acquire a clarity and simplicity for Knox until the 1550s, but already by 1547, as we shall see, the crucial seeds of his later attitudes

6. Knox, op. cit., pp.132-37

had been sown.

In solving its problems just as in the build-up of its tensions Protestantism acquired a new impetus from the secular world. Scottish politics, as I explained in Chapters Three and Four, took shape in considerable part around the antagonism of self-interested factions. It should not be supposed, however, that these antagonisms resulted simply in chaos, violence and barbarism. Professor Donaldson's comparison of the political scene to the party politics of the eighteenth century has provided the old orthodoxy with an important challenge.⁷ Even without powerful central mechanisms of control unwritten norms of behaviour or simple fear of consequences curbed many of the more aggressive tendencies of ambitious politicians. Many examples could be given of occasions when simple displays of armed strength were sufficient to produce the desired political effects - notably the occasion in February 1525 when the Queen Mother surrendered her power without a fight to the powerful coalition of Angus, Arran and Lennox. Up to a point therefore the political situation resembled a mere 'dance of death' - not so much the actual enactment of aggressive feelings as a series of ritualistic outlets for them. On many occasions, however, skirmishes and also some extremely bloody battles occurred - for instance the notorious 'Cleanse the Causeway' incident in Edinburgh in 1520 between the Hamiltons and Douglasses, in itself only the culmination of violent collisions over the provostship of Edinburgh and the lands of Jedwood Forest, and the tremendous confrontation between

7. Donaldson, op. cit., pp.15-6

Angus and Lennox during the period of Douglas ascendancy, when Lennox's forces numbering several thousands were put to flight and Lennox himself slain.⁸ Nor was this violence confined to the nobility. I explained before how the most powerful magnates tried to turn kingship to their own advantage and how at times the monarchy became little more than an ordinary participant in the factional tensions of Scottish politics. Angus responded to his ejection from power in 1528 by mounting a large-scale resistance operation against James, the nature of which was only concealed by Angus's claim that his quarrel was with his enemies and not the king. He not merely disobeyed the royal commands to pass north of the River Spey and to appear in parliament, but fortified himself in his castle of Tantallon and resisted a royal seige conducted by ten thousand troops. In the interval he had actually pursued James to the gates of Dunbar and had burnt two villages near the king's forces 'that the king might have light to see withal upon Friday in the morning.'⁹

By the 1540s Protestantism was entering on a new phase of oppositionism. This was partly a result of support from secular forces - the pro-English party and personally ambitious factions and individuals - and collusion with these forces ensured not merely an intensification of Protestant discontent, but also a cross-fertilization of modes of action. In the 1520s there was a clear disparity between the secular and religious dynamics in Scottish society. Patrick Hamilton allegedly rejected the attempts of Sir James Hamilton and

8. Fraser, *The Douglas Book*, op. cit., pp.191-3

9. *The State Papers of Henry the eighth*, Vol.4, 1836, p.510

John Duncan, laird of Airdrie, to rescue him with the words 'Put up thy sword into thy sheath'.¹⁰ It was probably the armed support of the East Coast lairds who accompanied him that enabled Wishart to carry on his ministry for so long, but his own attitude towards the use of force seems to have been defensive in character. According to Knox, Wishart disarmed a priest who tried to kill him, but then protected him from attack with the Christ-like words 'Who-soever troubles him shall trouble me'. The reaction of Wishart's supporters was less passive: 'Deliver the traitor to us or else we will take him by force.'¹¹

Wishart's scruples about violence were those of orthodox Protestantism and even allowing for the size of religious dissent in society it is unlikely that many Protestants could have discarded this legacy of passivity without encouragement from the secular world. Beaton's murder was essentially a manifestation of secular violence. It was a Scottish equivalent of the secular inspiration which English Protestants obtained from England's centralized violence against domestic traitors and foreign enemies.¹² Though such action derived from the indigenous operation of Scottish politics, it now ceased to be exclusive to ordinary politicians. Many Protestants gratefully accepted native solutions to their problems. Indeed such solutions were not necessarily a secular gospel into which they were initiated by their profaner colleagues in St. Andrews: on the contrary, Scottish Protestants had been Scots before they had been Protestants.

Whatever the secular background to Beaton's murder

10. Lorimer, op. cit., pp.144-51

11. Knox, op. cit., p.131

12. See below Section B, Chapter 6

outside and also within Protestantism Knox insisted that it was an act of religious rather than secular violence. According to Knox, James Melvin a man of nature most gentle and most modest' resisted the initial rude attacks of John and Peter Leslie and then solemnly executed Beaton with the words 'Before my God I protest that neither the hatred of thy person nor the fear of any trouble thou could have done to me in particular moved nor moves me to strike thee'.¹³

But within this religious explanation Knox incorporated an important revelation of the secular dynamics of the act.

'We would,' he wrote, 'that the reader should observe God's just judgements and how that he can deprehend the worldly wise in their own wisdom, make their table to be a snare to trap their own feet, and their own presupposed strength to be their own destruction.'¹⁴ This identification of strength with destruction was central to Scottish and indeed to mediaeval thought in general. Scottish politics, as we have seen, were neither chaotic nor perennially violent. They moved in accordance with a fairly uncomplicated logic, but this logic sometimes included violent solutions to political problems and also the use of violence against powerful individuals. Because of this Scottish political philosophies tended to be cyclical in character and their motifs the waywardness of fortune and the contingency of greatness. England on the other hand with its new power and dynastic stability could wed itself more easily to a Protestant philosophy of continuance - the theory of the 'powers that be' - which made politicians fixed stars in the social

13. Knox, op. cit., p.177

14. Ibid., p.130

constellation. But for a society like Scotland which had witnessed the assassination of James the third, the humiliation of James the fourth, the collapse of Angus and many lesser reversals of fortune the finiteness of success and the mortality of its heroes was more obvious. Sir David Lindsay infused his poem on the death of Beaton with a profound scepticism about power or at least about aggrandisement. According to Lindsay, Beaton, through a combination of pride and ambition had acquired a dominion in Scotland equal to Lucifer's in heaven, but only to emulate Lucifer's fall.¹⁵ Lindsay took his cue about the instability of power from Boccaccio, Knox from God, but both gave expression to a native reality. Power seemed to contain an inbuilt God-given flaw and though Knox and Lindsay were speaking of power gained by ambition Scottish politics could have given them little reason to suppose that just rule was any greater guarantee of stability. The author of the 'Complaint of Scotland' also spoke extensively of the cyclical nature of political fortune and of fortune in general: 'lordships and dignities have increasing, declination and extermination, the mutations of every worldly thing is certain...' he wrote.¹⁶

This native context was a vital contributant to Knox's acceptance of Beaton's murder. On the surface it amounted also to an acceptance of political resistance. For Beaton was not merely Antichrist's chief Scottish emissary; he was also Scotland's chancellor and the most influential politician in the country. From Luther to Calvin Protestant

15. Lindsay, 'The Tragedy of the (Late Cardinal Beaton)' in the Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp.130-43, ll.246-8

16. Complaynt of Scotland, op. cit.

orthodoxy utterly repudiated the assassination of politicians - (i) the 'higher powers' of Romans 13 - except by individuals with an unusual and exceptional commission from God. Melvin, Beaton's assassin, claimed that he and his colleagues had been commissioned by God to revenge Wishart's death, but he omitted to state whether the commission was an intermediate one - from God's word - or a direct one - from God. The latter concept - that of the Jehu-like providential avenger - fell into the category previously accepted by Protestant reformers. The point about this form of political resistance was that it was exceptional and also relatively unpredictable and unspecifiable. This was why it was acceptable to otherwise politically passive Protestants. It removed from them the onus of nominating offenders, avengers and punishable classes of offence. It is possible, however, indeed likely that these issues failed to occur to Knox in the case of Beaton's murder. For Knox Beaton was always paramountly a cleric rather than a politician: his political power was a means to the establishment of the 'kingdom of darkness.'¹⁷

It seems probable that Knox's political attitudes remained relatively unclarified in this period. His collaboration with the Castilians involved him in an armed rebellion against the governor and the Queen Mother. But the siege of the castle was conducted by French troops and an actual struggle with the forces of authority in Scotland avoided. Also, there was little incentive for Knox to prepare himself mentally for a potential struggle, for he seems to have

17. See for instance Knox, op. cit., pp.13,15

decided at an early stage that God had doomed the cause of the Castilians because of their immorality.¹⁸ If Knox's political consciousness was in fact active at this stage he may have acceded to the argument of England's 'assured men' that Scotland's King was English and the present incumbents of the office usurpers.¹⁹ This would certainly have violated the Protestant orthodoxy of the 'higher powers'. A year later, however, Knox referred from the galleys to the obedience due by God's Word to princes. It was accepted by most Protestants, in accordance with Paul's reference to the 'powers that be', that actual rule was equivalent to ordained rule, and Knox made no attempt to qualify this dictum with regard to Scotland's 'princes'.²⁰ Knox's attitudes in the galleys in 1548 were not necessarily his attitudes in St. Andrews in 1547. The potentiality of resistance to authority had by then receded. Protestant political ideologies tended to be extremely volatile between differing contexts, as will become evident when we examine the ideas of the Marian exiles. It was not, however, merely political subversion but the overall employment of violence in the Protestant cause that Knox seems to have doubted at this time. In the galleys he strongly repudiated a plot by some of the Castilians to obtain release by murdering their guards. As at St. Andrews he spurned self-confidence in merely human efforts and the 'force of friends'. Deliverance would come only from God and would 'redound to His glory only'.²¹ This turned out to be expedient advice and God's

18. Ibid, pp.204-5

19. Merriman, op. cit.

20. Knox, op. cit., Vol.3, pp.17-8, 25-6

21. Knox, op. cit., Vol. 1, p.229

deliverance emerged in the strange guise of English diplomatic action. And at St. Andrews too there had been little incentive to trust in human action that was both disorganised and weak.

But at no point in this period was Knox far from the realization that God could become politically instrumental through human agents. In later years he certainly regarded James Melvin as such an agent and even if the notion of Melvin's godliness perhaps grew up after Beaton's assassination as a convenient mythology to dignify a Protestant triumph it can hardly be supposed that Knox regarded his downfall at this time with anything less than applause. Lindsay, who was a much more moderate individual than Knox, certainly believed that Beaton had incurred God's just punishment.²² It was possible for God to work through sinful men and even if it was not permissible to incite sinful men to violence at least the act which they had performed could be condoned. Again whatever Knox's conviction about the ultimate futility of the efforts of the Castilians it is highly significant that he acted as an energetic chaplain to the forces in St. Andrews and allowed himself to be involved in a venture which would probably only gain its objective by swords and ammunition. Complex mental and psychological processes were operating within Knox at this time and the evidence unfortunately only allows us occasional glimpses of what these were. It would be interesting to know if his reservations about the political events of 1546-8 were the product of a personal distrust for the secular

22. Lindsay, op. cit., 11.239-45

violence of Scottish politics or rather of a respect for the political ideology of official Protestantism. What is obvious, however, is that a combination of religious and secular tensions in society led Knox into situations where by his very presence he in a sense condoned violence (including rebellion against the political authorities of Scotland) and was exposed to violence and to its potential productivity. The galleys, where he wrote a paraphrase of Henry Balnaves' 'Treatise on Justification', appropriately revealed Knox in a more quietistic mood, but a letter which he sent at this time to the congregation in St. Andrews contained ominous suggestions as to the form which future Protestant activism in Scotland might take:

'Rejoice (yet I say) spiritually, and be glad; the time of the battle is short but the reward is eternal. Victory is sure without ye list to fly (which God forbid) from Christ. But that ye may plainly know whereby are Satan and the world overcome and which are the weapons against whom they may not stand, ye shall read diligently this work following; which I am sure no man having the spirit of God shall think tedious nor long, because it containeth nothing except the very Scriptures of God and meditations of his law... But as for the ungodly, because their works are wicked they may not abide the light. And therefore they abhor all godly writings, thinking them tedious, though they contain not the length of the Lord's Prayer. But according to the threatening of the prophet Isaiah, saying, "Because they contemn the law of the Lord God,

he shall condemn them. Their hearts shall be indured; in the day of anguish and trouble they shall despair and curse the Lord God into their hearts. They shall be numbered to the sword and in the slaughter shall they fall. Then shall they know that their works were vain and that they placed their refuge in lies. The vestiments of spiders' webs (which are their vain works) shall not abide the force of the Lord's wind; but they shall stand naked and the works of iniquity in their hands to their extreme confusion.²³

This statement of means and ends contained obvious potentialities for a Protestant crusade of violence. Knox described a distribution of labour whereby Protestants would spread the Gospel, whilst God would defeat their religious enemies. But what if God proved hesitant to act or if Protestants found themselves in a position to enact the slaughter which was such a cause of eager anticipation? In this eventuality they might easily discard their metaphorical weapons and take up God's actual weapons.

Knox's statements at this stage therefore present us with a mild case of ideological 'lag' - a reluctance to entirely reconcile himself to some of the militancy in which Protestantism had already involved itself. But the social process which ended with the failure of civic Protestantism in 1547 was undoubtedly crucial to the formation of his political outlook. It left a legacy of attachment to the merchants, lesser lords and ordinary folk - the 'commonalty' of Scotland - who had provided the mainstay of Protestant support in the 1540s. It elevated Knox to a position of

23. Knox, op. cit., Vol.3, pp.10-1

leadership and left him with a colossal sense of his own personal responsibility for the future success of Protestantism in Scotland, a sense which was to become increasingly politicized in the 1550s. And it encouraged him to condone violence against religious enemies (including rulers) by involving him in situations of militancy and warfare. Knox had yet to convince himself of the validity of political resistance and regicide, but by the end of his first period in Scotland the vital conditions for his politicization were complete.

SECTION BENGLAND, 1540-1553Chapter 1England's Prophets

The St. Andrews rebellion ended in failure, but within two years Knox secured release from the French galleys to become minister at Berwick, then Newcastle and finally in the south of England. It was apparently ironic after his stirring experience of religious opposition in Scotland that Knox should have found refuge in a Church that was moving forward with almost impeccable Protestant orthodoxy. The most influential churchmen in England held radical views on the sacrament, were steadily purging worship of Catholic ceremonial and before the end of the reign produced official articles of faith that clearly reflected the influence of Calvin. There was apparently far less for Knox to get angry about in England than there had been in Scotland. But his four years in England failed to mellow him and in fact the outlook of many of his new colleagues was hardly mellower than his own. Already many English reformers were set on a course that was to lead them with Knox to new, radical conceptions of politics in the 1550s.

However, England's route in this matter was significantly different from Scotland's. In the rise of militant Protestantism two factors were of crucial importance - a sense of power and a sense of rejection. The latter produced a cumulative bitterness towards opponents, whilst the former provided Protestants with the opportunity and courage



to indulge this hostility in confrontation. Scottish Protestantism reached this militant phase by the late 1540s, whereas other Protestant movements like that in France which encountered a similar State rejection developed far more slowly. But Scottish Protestantism was less a precocious offspring than a forced growth. It outstripped the potentialities of its own religious permeation in Scottish society by enlisting the potent secular support of English collaborators and faction-motivated individuals. The situation of English Protestantism on the other hand was quite different. Its power evolved within the educated and politically influential classes and also as an authentic and self-supporting Protestant culture, in large part unreliable upon non-religious sources of support. Under Henry the eighth Protestants were able to infiltrate vital areas of government; under Edward the sixth they established a Protestant regime. Much of the reason for this development lay in England's steady reception of humanistic learning in this period (an experience from which the more isolated Scotland remained relatively immune at this stage) and in the easy assimilation of this with Protestant doctrine.¹ The 'New Learning' consisted not merely in a new interest in the pagan classics, but in a concern for biblical translation and exegesis, practices which tended to result in moral criticism of the Church and also in scepticism about the ecclesiological and doctrinal suppositions of Catholicism. It was perfectly possible of course to combine humanism with

1. For the reception of humanism in Scotland see John Durkan, 'The Cultural Background in Sixteenth Century Scotland' in *Essays on the Scottish Reformation*, op. cit.

Catholicism - Henry the eighth and Sir Thomas More are obvious examples - but Henry's chief architects of the schism with Rome, Cromwell and Cranmer, found their minds tending naturally in the direction of Protestantism. In this development Henry was comparatively helpless. His humanistic instincts demanded toleration for a vernacular Bible, but the effects of this were so theologically disruptive that he withdrew it from the ordinary laity in 1543. The educated classes on the other hand had to be allowed to keep their subversive literature, for Henry had no intention of lowering the morale of his most literate and dynamic supporters. The enthusiastic piety of members of the nobility like the Duchess of Suffolk and the king's last wife, Catherine Parr, who made subtle and persistent attempts to put an end to Protestant 'tarrying for the magistrate', eventually proved politically irresistible. Much speculation has centred around Henry the eighth's appointment of Richard Cox and Sir John Cheke as tutors for the future Edward the sixth - a decision which destined England for Protestant kingship. Whether Henry, sensitive as always to the social cohesion of his realm, had in fact, as Cranmer later claimed, decided before the end of his reign to discard the mass is unlikely ever to be ascertained. Nor can it be determined to what extent Henry knew Cox and Cheke to be Protestants. What seems evident is that in providing for his son an education in Renaissance humanism - a culture now strongly associated with Protestantism - Henry was acceding to forces stronger than himself. The conservative bishops, more lawyers than theologians, could only have provided an arid and unim-

aginative education for Edward. Of course in all this there was a certain element of fortuitousness. Had Henry ever by some chance realized the strength of the radical Protestant sympathies which courtiers like Seymour (as Lord Protector England's next ruler) kept so carefully concealed from him he might have been frightened into a more protective education for Edward and a greater cultivation of the conservative Gardiner faction.

In this way the covert heresy of Henry the eighth's court managed to secure official recognition in the reign of his son. Though the Edwardian Reformation proceeded cautiously at first, considerable licence was allowed to public discussion and by 1553 England believed, officially at least, in a sacrament of spiritual reception and in supralapsarian predestination. Protestant radicalism took root in England partly out of Henry the eighth's failure to combine his break with Rome with a solid Lutheran religious settlement - a decision which allowed religious attitudes to remain open-ended and receptive to the new thrusting idealism of Zurich and Geneva. Edward's reign therefore witnessed the rise to power of a new generation of radical Protestants - literate, voluble and immensely enthusiastic. These reformers were alienated from powerful segments of the establishment, for instance from the royal councillors who called the king's preachers 'prating knaves' in 1552 and from a whole network of official obstructionism within the country. But they themselves now constituted a vital element within the establishment. Their ideas were beginning to find legislative expression and to permeate English society, and their official

status provided them with ample opportunity to popularize their attitudes in the localities and to the central government. Protestant power in England thus had a very different source from Protestant power in Scotland. Scottish Protestantism behaved as a somewhat uneasy parasite upon Anglophile and factional interests to attain its voice in society. English Protestantism acquired its sense of social importance mainly through the conversion of politically influential groups and individuals.

But this growth within the official power structures of the community left English Protestantism with no easy or indulgent attitude towards its religious enemies. On the contrary, it acquired a burning sense of resentment and hostility. For Henry the eighth's Catholic regime never cossetted its Protestant members; it tolerated them as long as they maintained the political etiquette of silence and evasion. And within the country at large it struck viciously, if somewhat sporadically, at its Protestant opponents. Protestants were burnt in Henry the eighth's England as well as in James the fifth's Scotland. Arriving in what he hoped would be a refuge from Scottish persecution, Alexander Alane (Alesius) was first troubled by a 'proud impudent railer' hired by the Scottish bishops and then was noisily threatened when he addressed the English parliament.² Of course an immense fund of anti-Catholic resentment had already built up in England, expressed most vigorously in the rude scorn of Lollardy, and in the course of the Reformation crisis some Protestants like William Tyndale adopted

2. Alane, op. cit.

a stridently negative tone, describing opponents as 'sealed with the mark of the beast'.

As in Scotland many early reformers were more captivated by their conversion experience than by any sense that society would persistently deny to others the right to testify to this experience. Thomas Bilney, for instance, pinned his whole ministry on the 'marvellous comfort and quietness' he had experienced on reading Erasmus's translation of the New Testament. Hugh Latimer described him as 'meek and charitable, a simple good soul, not fit for this world'. Others, moved by instincts of survival, were forced by necessity to give scope to the more positive features of their experience and to curb their religious hostility. Thomas Becon, who was forced in 1540 to recant his denial of the central doctrine of transubstantiation, subsequently did penance by writing a series of devotional tracts which possessed no more than a mildly Protestant flavour. Becon repeatedly urged his readers to follow the rules of piety, to be joyous, compassionate individuals, to be like good trees bringing forth good fruit.³ It was a creed which solved its problems by the 'love-in' rather than the community action programme. Becon attempted in these works to educate his readers in the basic truths of the Gospel rather than to inflame them by crisis-talk of the religious sin in society. The dialogue idiom that was his most characteristic literary form was perfectly suited to convey this mood. Becon's characters met together as

3. Thomas Becon, *Early Works*, Ed. J. Ayre, Parker Society, Cambridge, 1843, e.g. p.38

friends to exchange pleasantries and to convey their serious insights to each other in a calm and friendly atmosphere. 'The Christmas Banquet', the title of one of Becon's works, was at once an actual event and a metaphor of a spiritual experience. Becon's host, Philemon, entertained his Christmas guests in his house and in this way an occasion of ordinary conviviality became a context for spiritual renewal and celebration.⁴

Becon's restraint was not merely induced by fear; it was also stimulated by the hope that the king would eventually opt for a Protestant settlement. Henry after all had broken with Rome, had allowed the Ten Articles of 1536 (which omitted four of the seven sacraments) and had permitted Cranmer to work on liturgical revision. In the light of England's rescue from the 'tyranny of the Babylonical strumpet' Becon could sometimes delude himself that, as he put it, all old things had passed and new things entered in instead of them.⁵ Henry's few religious sops - a vernacular Bible, certain prayers and treatises in English - he described as an 'incomparable benefit'.⁶ Despite this amenability Becon continued to be hounded by the Catholics and was in virtual hiding for a time in the 1540s.⁷ Many others must have been subjected to similar harassment especially in the period of Catholic reaction that followed the conservative Six Articles of 1539. Vivid descriptions survive

4. Ibid, pp.59-84

5. Ibid, p.181

6. Ibid, p.128

7. For biographical details of Becon see D.S. Bailey, Thomas Becon and the Reformation of the Church in England, Edinburgh, 1952

of Latimer's tussles with Catholic opponents in his diocese of Worcester in the 1530s. Some emotional compensation existed for reformers like Bacon who hoped, as Latimer did, that Henry might be worn down like a stone subjected to the slow dripping of water.⁸ Others probably dealt with their hostility simply by clenching their teeth, but all Protestants must have experienced a cumulative sense of irritation in this period. Some, perhaps either angrier or in more danger than their fellows, escaped to the continent, where they were able to bask in the reformed purity of Zurich, Geneva or Basle. The exilic ideology of William Turner, John Bale and Henry Brinkelow ('banished...by the forked caps of England for speaking the truth') is our first evidence of the new rhetorical aggressiveness of English Protestantism. The very existence of a Henrician exile, the hounding and harassment of Protestants at home, the indictment of hundreds of Londoners after the Six Articles Act, the martyrdom of John Lambert and Anne Askew - all this is evidence of a religious dialectic as sharp and incisive as Scotland's. Persecution and also power - the same conditions, now in a different form, that had raised John Knox raised the new English reformers of the 1540s. And as Protestant confidence blossomed, with the security of exile or, after 1547, with the encouragement of governments, Protestants inevitably began to exercise their legacy of rejection by abrasive recriminations and accusations against their enemies.⁹

8. See Allan G. Chester, *Hugh Latimer*, Philadelphia, 1954, p.149

9. The material in the preceding paragraphs of this chapter has been drawn largely from the following sources: A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, London, 1964, Chapters 2, 4 and 8; J.J. Scarisbrick, *Henry the eighth*, London, 1968, pp.470-84; L.B. Smith, *Henry the eighth and the Protestant Triumph*, *American Historical Review*, Vol.71, 1966

But before we pass on to consider the new perspectives of the 1540s an important question has to be raised. How much of a group were these English reformers? Was there something in the background, the culture, the current status of some that implied a greater potential for radical attitudes? For the political stances of English reformers during the Marian period present us with a bewildering diversity of approach - between martyrdom and exile, between the passive and the regicidal, between the secular and the sacred. In his 'Revolution of the Saints' Michael Walzer reduced this complexity to a simple formula: Marian politics divided essentially along Genevan and non-Genevan lines. The English Calvinists, who found their spiritual home at Geneva, were prophets and revolutionaries, solely preoccupied with the destruction of idolatry and with man's spiritual welfare. The other exiles were legalists rather than idealists. They still thought of themselves as public officers of the late king and were uncritical supporters of the religious order which he had decided to establish. The Strasbourg exile, John Ponet, possessed an un-Calvinistic preoccupation with property; his concerns were 'obviously more profane than holy'.¹⁰

The English reformers who concern us in this section became martyrs or exiles in Mary's reign and our problem is to explain the political attitudes which they came to adopt at that time. Walzer's demarcation should therefore be borne in mind throughout this study, but its ultimate credibility becomes immediately suspect when the religious

10. Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, London, 1966, pp.92-113

affiliations of these individuals are examined. Their theological position was both radical and eclectic and the two leading influences were probably Calvin and Bullinger. The Forty-Two Articles of the Edwardian Church possessed a strongly Calvinistic flavour, but they defy any attempt at description by a simple all-inclusive 'party' label. Most of the new English reformers were anxious to defer to the wisdom of the various leading radical theologians. Bartholomew Traheron, for instance, favoured Calvin's predestinarian opinions, but made considerable efforts to achieve agreement with Bullinger. But in the quarrel at Frankfurt over Knox's attempt to rid the Prayer Book of its 'popish dregs', as Calvin put it, Traheron found himself on the more moderate side. John Foxe, on the other hand, whose apocalyptic yearnings were to inspire many of the most respectable churchmen of Elizabeth's reign, took the 'Calvinist' side. Most curiously of all, Christopher Goodman, Knox's principal colleague in revolutionary politics at Geneva, appended his name to the Strasbourg letter which first requested the retention of the practices of the English Church in their 'former perfection'.¹¹ The Strasburg group were entirely unwilling to consider themselves Calvin's opponents on this matter. They requested Calvin's judgement because of his 'singular judgement' and 'special pre-eminence'. Eventually they merely issued a rather surprised rebuke to Calvin for providing Knox with a 'club of Hercules' for his opponents, but at the same time assured him of 'their entire veneration and love'.¹²

11. Knox, op. cit., Vol.4, pp.66, 19, 16

12. Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation, Vol.2, Cambridge, 1847, p.756

Possibly more English reformers were prepared to accept Bullinger's teaching wholesale than were prepared to accept Calvin's. Bullinger's cultivation of England was immense and unceasing. He sent his disciples to study at English universities; he dedicated editions of his 'Decades' to prominent Englishmen; and he maintained a continuous correspondence with leading English Protestants over a period of years. The compliments of his English friends in return far exceeded the normal courtesies. One told him 'You seem to be affected with, as it were, a father's feeling and no ordinary regard toward our England!'¹³ Calvin has sometimes been seen as the leader of a Protestant 'International' and Geneva as the 'party headquarters' for Calvinist endeavour in other countries, but with regard to England Bullinger has claim to a similar title. It was a role which he continued during the Marian exile, when it seems probable that he gave encouragement to the politically rebellious instincts of some of the English colony at Zurich. This was an encouragement which Calvin never rendered, not even to Walzer's exponents of so-called Calvinist politics at Geneva. Bullinger, after all, though his policy on social discipline was less stringent than Calvin's, was dedicated to the theocratic ideal of the holy commonwealth, the society organized according to God's precepts. And in so far as all the new English reformers were Calvinists in some sense it seems wise to expect some affinity of social and political attitude between the exiles in various centres,

13. Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation, Vol.1, Cambridge, 1846, p.313

regardless of their exact location on the Bullinger-Calvin axis, rather than the operation of categories like Calvinist and non-Calvinist.

Moreover, the more total Calvinists and the future Genevan exiles seem to have enjoyed a status in the Edwardian Church equal to that of other radical reformers. Christopher Goodman, Knox's future colleague at Geneva and exponent of the politics of regicide, was Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford. Miles Coverdale, future exile at Geneva, was Bishop of Exeter during the reign. Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, spoke highly of John Bradford, a notable Calvinist martyr in Mary's reign, and suggested that he was worthy of a bishopric. Thomas Lever, who visited Calvin in 1554 and devised at Frankfurt with Knox a compromise liturgy considerably to the left of the Second Edwardian Prayer Book, was selected to preach the important Lenten sermons before the king in 1550. These men rubbed shoulders with others whose theology was possibly less Calvinistic, but whose political stances and ideas were to become important in the 1550s - with William Turner, physician to the Protector Somerset, who wisely declined the distant and arduous bishopric of Ossory, with Thomas Becon, chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer, and with John Hooper, more a Zwinglian than a Calvinist, who fought for the abolition of vestments after his elevation to the see of Gloucester. John Ponet, one of the most important ideologists of the Marian period, became Bishop of Rochester and then of Winchester in this period.

The ideologists of the 1550s were to speak with different

voices, but in order to explain this it is vital to recognize that in the 1540s they were identifiable as a group. In no respect was this more apparent than in their common response to the challenge and threat of Catholicism in society. In the earlier part of this chapter I dealt with the conditions that made a dualistic configuration in religion possible in England by the 1540s. None of the new Protestant preachers failed to paint the religious divisions in society in the starkest and most irreconcilable colours. For Thomas Becon after a torrent of abuse against the 'bellied hypocrites' and the 'whole glittering face of their popish solemnity' there could only be one conclusion: 'Can light and darkness agree? Can Christ and Belial be at unity? ... There must needs be dissension between them...' ¹⁴ In exposing these religious contradictions Protestants submerged subtleties and precise distinctions beneath the most simplistic formulas. From Basle during Henry the eighth's reign William Turner attempted to rob the religious enemy of his various devious disguises and expose him with simple (if illusory) clarity. Turner hoped to expose the 'Romish Fox' that 'the whole realm may spy him, and see him, and know what he is, what his name is, and where he lurketh' and that thereby his 'two true beasts' skins', the laws of the Church and the king's ceremonies, might be revealed as shams. The concept of non-papal Catholicism had no meaning for Turner. Institutions and observances associated with the Pope but still practiced

14. Becon, *Catechism etc.*, Ed. J. Ayre, Parker Society, Cambridge, 1844, p.13

in England were popish rather than Henrician. It was only the Pope's supremacy and financial power that had been driven from England, not the 'whole Pope', for his doctrine and ceremonial remained untouched. The conservative bishops were no more than covert papists. Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, was gardiner in more than name: he was the 'noble waterer of the pope's garden' and the Church over which he presided was no more than 'the pale of the pope's garden'. Gardiner was only one of a powerful cadre of papal conspirators in England who treated the schism with Rome as a non-event and the business of their enemies was to ferret them out and present them, as it were, before the committee of un-English and un-Protestant activities. With Turner Protestant ideology committed itself to a total polarization - to confrontation with a 'total Pope' or a 'partial Pope' rather than simply with Reformation Catholicism.¹⁵ The Protestant had also become a revolutionary intellectual whose will was 'real' and whose duty was to destroy the 'false consciousness' of the ill-educated or simple-minded, to expose to view the simplicities of life amidst its perplexities and contradictions. Only the perverse or obstinate could fail to understand the society around them and their own position in it: 'Wherefore if thou be not wilfully blind, and a member of Antichrist, thou mayest easily see and perceive which be wolves and which lambs,' wrote Henry Brinkelow.¹⁶

15. William Turner, *The hunting and finding out of the Romish fox*, Basle, 1543, A5-B8, E7; Turner, *The rescuing of the Romish fox*, Zurich, 1545, A7

16. Henry Brinkelow, *The Complaint of Roderick Mors etc.*, Ed. J.M. Cowper, Early English Text Society, London, 1874, p.73.

In Edward's reign the existence of vast areas of popery in English society was accepted and bitterly resented by John Ponet. 'By what means,' he wrote, 'chiefly hath these talks been sown abroad, and bruted amongst the people? Forsooth by the judges in the circuits, and the justices of the peace that be popishly affected. By bishops and their officers in their synods, and other meetings of ecclesiastical persons, by school masters in their grammar schools, by stewards when they keep their courts, by priests when they sit to hear auricular confession, and such like as mind nothing else but the plain subversion of the Kingdom of Christ and all Christian doctrine and the setting up again of the doctrine and kingdom of the Romish Antichrist to God's great dishonour.'¹⁷ Ponet's social documentation in this passage had fallen victim to his religious paranoia. In Mary's reign most influential Englishmen, concerned about national independence and about the property they had acquired from monasteries, were to consider reconciliation with the Pope only with great reluctance. But Ponet had nothing to say about the lesser forms and degrees of Catholicism and their transmission through institutions and persons. The pernicious virus that was infecting English society was far more menacing - an ambitious and conspiratorial popery.

It was John Bale who supplied the rationale for this verbal crusade. In his sensitivity to history and apocalyptic hopes for England Bale was a precursor of John Foxe. But in comparing the times of Wyclif with his own he had

17. John Ponet, A notable sermon concerning the right use of the Lord's Supper and other things very profitable for all men to know, 1550, G1

only moderate cause to proclaim the gospel of progress. 'Antichrist and his beastly brood' were now nearer their predestined end, but they were still rampant in English society.¹⁸ The correct emotion in this situation was hate, and Bale explained why Protestants had no reason to feel guilty about such feelings. Protestants, unlike the 'gentle and soft wits' who complained about their savage rebukes, had to contend with dragons and odious monsters. 'Surely,' Bale continued, 'I know no kind of charity to be showed to the devil..... "With a perfect hate, Lord, (saith David) have I hated those bloodthirsty enemies which were in their presumption against thee" ... strongly and with most mighty stomach are hypocrites to be invaded, which will not give place to the verity ... Necessary is it that the elect flock of God do hate the unclean fowls, which yet hold their habitation in Babylon.'¹⁹

This was exactly the way in which Knox always countered criticism of his verbal violence. On more than one occasion in the 1550s he justified his feelings of anger and outrage, possibly as much to himself as to his critics, by explaining that it was anger in a good cause - a 'spiritual hatred'.²⁰ Indeed in reading the rhetoric of these English preachers one realizes how little the invective of the 'Thundering Scot' was a product of Scottish temperament and how much of Protestant alienation. Bale persistently described the spiritual perversion of the Roman Church in the language

18. John Bale, *Select Works*, Ed. H. Christmas, Parker Society, 1849, p.13

19. *Ibid*, pp.182-3

20. See for instance Knox, *op. cit.* Vol.3, p.195

of sensuality and sexual obscenity.²¹ And few statements of Knox exceed the following almighty blast from Thomas Becon: 'What need I to speak of that great whore of Babylon, "the mother of fornications and abominations of the earth", which hath made drunken with the wine of the wrath of her whoredom; yea, the very kings and rulers of the earth have played the avouterers with her? The fornication of that most filthy and stinking strumpet is so openly known and made manifest unto us, both by godly books and learned sermons that it needeth not here to be rehearsed'.²²

This was the same well-worn theme as Knox had employed in his 'castle sermon' in 1547 and Becon treated it with a similar bitter eloquence. But it is doubtful if even Knox could have equalled the raucous and vulgar sarcasm which Antony Gilby displayed in the following passage: 'Oh miserable and changeable nature of man. Oh twice miserable God, whom this miserable man maketh. Yea thrice miserable, for he must come down into the chalice at the call of every whoremonger and sodomite, drunkard and covetous caitiff, and be straightways swallowed into his filthy and insatiable paunch, that the first beginning and ending of his godhead may be like miserable'.²³ Gilby no doubt would have liked to condemn the 'mass-mongers' he was ridiculing to a state of eternal indigestion!

The seriousness and intensity of the Protestant's involvement in England's religious tensions can be judged by

21. Bale, *op. cit.*, pp.189,251

22. Becon, *Catechism*, *op. cit.*, p.555

23. Anthony Gilby, *An answer to the devilish detection of S. Gardiner*, U7

the urgent, dynamic and sanctified role in which he cast himself. By the time of Edward's reign many Protestants would probably have answered a questionnaire about profession with a single word - 'prophet'. Antony Gilby, who wrote a long commentary on the prophet Micah in this period, closely identified himself with the prophets of ancient Israel, especially in their denunciation of the false prophets of idolatry; 'I must needs say with Jeremiah, Wo unto the prophets and prophesy their own imaginations....'²⁴ But it was more than incipient Calvinists and future Genevan exiles who shared Gilby's occupational status. Most significantly of all for the purposes of this study, it was shared by the future Strasbourg exile, John Ponet. Ponet set himself in righteous indignation over his papist enemies in the role of prophet: 'Oh pestilent generation, what shall I say by the throats of these people? Forsooth I will say as the prophet David saith.... The throat of such slanderous talkers, of such judges, justices, bishops and their officers, of such schoolmasters, stewards, confessioners and so forth - their throat (I say) is an open sepulchre'.²⁵ But Ponet was only one of a whole generation of public officers who were increasingly mouthing the invective of Old Testament prophets. Robert Crowley wrote 'Give ear ye shepherds of this Church of England! ... give ear to the prophet Ezechial! For the same Lord that bade him speak unto the shepherds of Judah biddeth him speak unto you now also'.²⁶ And George Joye celebrated the immediate relevance of Hebrew prophecy for contemporary England with

24. Ibid, Aa2

25. Ponet, A notable sermon etc., op. cit., G4

26. Robert Crowley, Select Works, Ed. J.M. Cowper, London, 1872, p.13

these words: 'God of his infinite mercy hath restored us his prophet Isaiah speaking plain English'.²⁷ If Joye and the others were not exactly laying claim to be Isaiah re-incarnate, they were certainly claiming to have reanimated him for sixteenth century audiences. But Protestants were more than mere publicity agents for their Hebrew forbears. They sometimes made it completely clear, as Thomas Lever did, that the prophets and watchmen of the Old Testament were their own prototypes. 'I being a watchman,' wrote Lever, 'and by the light of God's word spying that the abomination of idolatrous covetousness hath kindled the indignation of God to consume and destroy the people of this realm do cry out against England by the voice of the prophet...'²⁸

In legend and also in fact Knox's status as Scotland's prophet is secure. But the similar pretensions of his English contemporaries have gone virtually unnoticed. Prophecy in fact provided the Edwardian reformers with the obvious idiom for the expression of their religious paranoia. This paranoia was a vital source of the assault on Mary Tudor in the 1550s. It involved a suspicious attitude to life, an immediate and anxious subjection of possible papists and idolators to scrutiny, and Hebrew prophecy, with its indiscriminating attitude towards all classes, was, as we shall see, to help to clear the way for indictment of even the highest offenders. But the indictment of Mary Tudor was to take expression in a bewildering variety of

27. George Joye, *The prophet Isaiah translated into English*, A6

28. Thomas Lever, *Sermons*, Ed. E. Arber, London, 1870, p.112

forms. I suggested above the probable inadequacy of a Geneva-non Geneva formula as an explanation of this diversity. The English radicals, of whatever shade of Calvinism, are recognizable as a group in the Edwardian period and it is the contention of this study that in their basic aspirations they continued as a group during the Marian period. During this period, however, they became politicians - politicians with a delicate and difficult constituency. Apathetic Englishmen had to be stirred to restore England to its Protestant purity. In this endeavour English Protestants were ready with considerable individual ingenuity to exploit the various resources of persuasion at their disposal and this involved more than simple prophetic condemnations of Mary Tudor as a papist. I hope to show that the ideological fragmentation of English Protestantism in the 1550s did not evolve out of a diversity of basic commitment, but that rather it was a function of ideology, of casuistry, of political adaptability.

One of the most important aspects of this adaptability was a flexibility in the use of language. In terms of this study it is important to illustrate not merely that many English Protestants of this generation were consumed by religious hatred, but also that even in the Edwardian period they were prepared to articulate this hatred in differing formulas. In justifying his hounding of the 'Romish fox' William Turner spoke not as a prophet but as an ordinary patriot: 'The love that I bear unto my natural country compelleth me at this time (most excellent and victorious prince) to be a hunter, to hunt and find out a certain cruel

beast....'²⁹ In the next chapter I shall deal more fully with the intense patriotism of the English Protestant, his burning commitment to the secular community and the English commonwealth. Inevitably this commitment tended to become intertwined with his Protestant faith. It was both a nationalistic awareness of his country's grandeur, a desire that the 'beauty of the realm' be appreciated in its past as well as its present, and also a desire to set the battle between Christ and Antichrist within an English context that inspired John Bale to his study of English history. Bale complained that in the English chronicles vice was 'more advanced than virtue and Romish blasphemy than godliness' and also that Polydore Virgil had perverted his writings with 'Romish lies and other Italian beggaries'.³⁰ For Bale his Protestantism meant that nationalism acquired a new religious dimension, but in the process Protestantism also acquired a new dignity and, as it were, secular sanctity.

Religious protest of course tended to generate its own biblically-oriented language and the Scriptures as the root-source of faith were bound to seem to the radical Protestant a rather more important validation for religion than the fact that Protestant success was in the interests of the nation. In the same way the service of the commonwealth could seem a more obvious reason for military, political and economic policies than the Bible. But Protestants were not always inclined to compartmentalize their commitments and secular language sometimes encroached into the religious

29. Turner, *The hunting etc.*, op. cit., A2

30. Bale, op. cit., p.8

sphere. In 1553 John Ponet translated a catechism for children from its original Latin and in the introduction he described his aim as the encouragement not merely of 'godliness toward God the author of all things' but also of 'loving affection to the common weal, the general mother of all'.³¹ In Henry the eighth's reign Henry Brinkelow had identified Protestantism with the nation by claiming that the bishops were spiritual robbers of the English commonwealth. 'And if,' he wrote 'it be not treason to the king to deface his injunctions, then what is treason? And again if it be not theft to the commonwealth to steal from them their spiritual food, then what is robbery and theft?'³² Religious offences could be described by the Protestant in secular categories simply because they were connected with his perennial concern - the prosperity and well-being of England's commonwealth. In his 'Notable Sermon concerning the right use of the Lord's Supper' John Ponet expressed concern at the continuing religious ignorance of the children of England: 'The evil dedication of the brood of England in popery and superstition should in conclusion be an overthrow to all your grace's most godly proceedings. Wherefore for God's love and the wealth of this your realm, I wish they should be remembered'.³³ Ponet's indictment was a two-dimensional one. The claim that a 'pestilent generation' of papists were guilty of religious damage not merely to God's cause but also to the welfare of the realm carried a secular power that a simple prophetic attack could not have

31. Ponet, A short catechism, 1553, A3-4

32. Brinkelow, op. cit., p.54

33. Ponet, A notable sermon etc., op. cit., G3

equalled.

This secular power - in various forms - became the English Protestant's most vital weapon in his future exile. In the case of individuals like John Ponet it would even disguise his basic Protestant commitment. But Ponet's Edwardian works - an attack upon the mass, a defence of the marriage of priests, and a translation of Ochino's 'Tragedy...of the unjust usurped primacy of the Bishop of Rome' - reveal him mainly as an accomplished theologian and as a religious polemicist of abrasive power.³⁴ The latter quality Ponet and his generation shared with Knox, and prophets north and south of the border were equals in venting their 'perfect hatred' on the 'whore of Babylon'. This hate, more embedded and habitual than with any previous generation of mainstream Protestants, was the basic condition of the drastic and physically violent assaults which both were to unleash against their religious enemies.

34. See for instance Ponet, A defence for marriage of priests, 1549, C7

Chapter 2 Protestant Patriots

Religious strain was only one part of the English Protestant's generally anxious mood in the 1540s. His commitments in English society were wider than his Protestantism and of particular importance was his intense nationalism, a kind of secular faith co-existing with his Protestant zeal. Various factors contributed to the new 'sceptered isle' mentality in England - the dynastic continuity of the Tudors and the stranglehold they managed to impose on the country after a period of turmoil, the boost to pride and independence given by the cleavage with Rome and the growing awareness of new economic power. The Protestant spoke of his patriotism less often than of his prophecy, but generally in fervent tones like those of Robert Crowley: 'I shall be no less worthy the name of a true-hearted Englishman than the trumpeter is worthy the name of a man of war, though he do not indeed fight but animate and encourage others'.¹ It was a measure of the passion which patriotism could inspire that Crowley should see his role through the simile of the warrior. The simile also had further implications, for the patriot-warrior would be bound to applaud the slaughter and bloodshed committed in his country's interest. We shall see later how both prophecy and patriotism could be inherently violent roles, able to sustain a politics of regicide. But for the moment let us simply note that the

1. Crowley, op. cit., p.131

English Protestant was the exponent of two enthusiasms.

The intensity of the enthusiasm of the English Protestant that he was English as well as Protestant is proved by the extent to which he was prepared to allow his patriotism to become an all-consuming interest, virtually submerging his Protestant concern. The sheer exuberance of Englishness was never better expressed than in Thomas Becon's hymn of national celebration - the 'Policy of War'. 'What kingdom in the world,' he wrote, 'is to be compared unto this English empire? How hath our most puissant and redoubted king fortified this his most flourishing monarchy, empire and kingdom with all things that any man can invent for the prosperous conservation of a common weal'. England's prosperity and military triumphs contrasted strikingly with the defeats and foreign invasions suffered by other nations. The reason for the trouble of these nations was quite simply sin - a sin in which England, for all its patriotic grandeur, was a participant. For this sin Becon experienced considerable vexation. 'Oh England, England, mine own native country,' he wrote, '...Would God thou did not abuse the most precious benefits, wherewith thou art endued from above before all other nations.' But for all their depth of feeling there was a curious ambiguity in these words. A kind of reconciliation shone through the remorse. Though Becon catalogued England's moral failings and the moral solutions required, he knew that England had somehow arbitrarily escaped the punishments which other nations had endured. And with good behaviour in the future all would continue to be well. Becon's final and most

enthusiastic vision was not of a religious Eden but of an altogether profaner paradise - an England strong, wealthy and independent. It was a vision of 'perpetual tranquility, peace, rest, quietness', of an England abounding in 'all kind of commodities that pertain unto the prosperous conservation of a public weal', of a coastline fortified against foreign tyrants.²

In this way Becon's prophetic disappointments tended to be lost in the midst of an orgy of chauvinism - a chauvinism perhaps induced by England's defeat of the Scots at Solway Moss. In a similar way the victory of Pinkie provided John Hooper, momentarily at least, with a point of glorious reconciliation with an otherwise alien environment. Indulging himself in England's imperialistic prospects, Hooper made the demand that with 'the occasion of all hatred and discord banished ... the good Scottish-Englishman may confess and do the same at home that he doth in foreign and strange countries, calling an Englishman always his countryman, and studious to do his pleasure before any other nation of the world'. This of course was an exact repetition of the chauvinistic insensitivity of England's official ideology.³ In this particular treatise Hooper showed himself happier with the 'heavenly victory of Pinkie' than he was distraught at the sin of society. The bulk of the work was a rather abstruse theological statement of the nature of 'Christ and his office' and Hooper drew an analogical relationship between the claim of England to Scotland and the claim of Christ to loyalty.

2. Becon, *Early Works*, op. cit., pp.239, 243-5, 261

3. See above Section A, Chapter 2, note 5

This compartmentalization of the religious and the social meant that the denunciations of papists and idolators which were a feature of many of Hooper's other works were replaced by a secular reverence for England and its empire.⁴

In view of all this it is hardly surprising that Protestants responded to threats to the nation in Edward the sixth's reign with single-minded horror. But the fact that patriotism could evoke such passionate enthusiasm in English Protestants, could make demands so total that their Protestantism was virtually overwhelmed also provides us with a vital clue, a kind of advance notice of what happened in the 1550s. Marian ideology, as I shall try to show, was a series of experiments, often of considerable sensitivity, for spanning the chasm between the Protestant ideologist and his largely unsympathetic audience. This audience was far less concerned with Protestantism than with its panic that the marriage of Mary to Philip of Spain might lead to a loss of national identity. In these circumstances the English Protestant's capacity for adaptability of role, the ability to appear patriotic rather than Protestant, could be made into one of his most vital weapons.

But all this is incidental to the main theme of this chapter - the way in which the Protestant's patriotism contributed to the build-up of his tensions in Edward's reign. The rebellions in Norfolk and the West Country in 1549 added drastically to the insecurity and also the acrimony of Protestants. Robert Crowley rose passionately to the

4. John Hooper, *Early Writings*, Ed. S. Carr, Parker Society, Cambridge, 1843, pp. xii-xiii

defence of 'so noble a common wealth', 'this noble realm of England, which God hath enriched with so many and so great commodities'.⁵ The over-reaction of many Protestants to the rebellions, which in fact were never a serious threat to the regime, may be partly a reflection of the accumulation of religious and social pressures on Protestants in the Edwardian period, but equally obviously they were manifestations of an affronted chauvinism. This was how John Veron addressed the rebels: 'All ye go about is to undo this noble and flourishing realm, and most naturally to betray your own natural country unto foreign nations and princes. I say unto you that all your mortal enemies that compass you round about (set them all together, Frenchmen, Scots, Danes, Turks) could not have found or imagined a more ready way to destroy England, than ye Englishmen did'. Veron then went on with a hesitation like that of a judge before pronouncing a death sentence to invest the rebels with 'horrible and odious names': they were 'traitors and most extreme enemies of the commonweal'.⁶

Veron's language (and Becon's and Hooper's before him) was the language of ordinary Englishness. And in view of the importance which language acquired in the 1550s we should look more closely at its structure. It was to be of considerable importance that Protestants could achieve an ideological rapport with other Englishmen who opposed Mary's Spanish marriage by drawing on a common stock of categories. Apart from the obvious language of Englishness - the

5. Crowley, *op. cit.*, pp.131, 149

6. John Veron, Preface to 'A most necessary and fruitful dialogue between the seditious libertine or rebel Anabaptist and the true obedient Christian, 1551, A8

commonwealth, the prosperity of the realm, the heinousness of treachery - Protestants and other patriots appealed to a wider fund of experience - the naturalness and commonness to all men of patriotic instincts.⁷ It followed from this that rebellion was 'unnatural' - as unnatural as a disease in an otherwise wholesome body - and that rebels were like inferior limbs with pretensions to take over the role of heads in the community.⁸ Indeed the description of a hierarchically-arranged society like England in organic imagery of this kind was not merely appropriate, but almost obvious. Nor were Protestants necessarily in danger of severing their rapport with the rest of the community if they placed their ideas within a wider cultural context. Veron illustrated that rebellion had been as dangerous for the Medes, the Persians, the Scythians, the Athenians and the Romans as it was now for England.⁹ In Mary's reign John Ponet was to look to the same classical sources for cautionary tales about tyrannical and treacherous rulers. And attention of course was also paid to biblical wisdom. Paul's dictum - 'the powers that be are ordained of God' - was impressed on the rebels of 1549 and on a whole generation of Englishmen.¹⁰ Biblical language, however, posed a threat to the ordinary language of patriotism. It was the threat that the English Protestant's Protestantism would absorb his patriotism, that 'patriotic talk' would be replaced by 'God-talk'. Here, for instance, was how

7. Becon, *Early Works*, op. cit., p.232

8. Crowley, op. cit., p.131; Lever, op. cit., p.78

9. Veron, op. cit., A6-7

10. F. Le Van Baumer, op. cit., Chapters 4 and 5

Thomas Lever incorporated the values and aspirations of Englishness within a prophetic framework: 'I will lift thee higher in honour, wealth and power than any other realm in or upon the earth, ... and so will I feed thee with the inheritance of Jacob thy father. I will restore unto ye whatsoever lands and holds in Scotland and in France did at any time belong unto Jacob thy father, unto the kings of this realm, ... for the Lord's own mouth hath spoken it'.¹¹ England here was on the verge of becoming not so much England as a 'new Israel'. If this had become the normal Protestant idiom for its patriotism it might have lessened the potential - a potential some Marian Protestants were acutely aware of - for communication between Protestants and patriots who were not Protestants. In fact, however, patriotism proved remarkably tenacious in the preservation of its linguistic autonomy, partly because of its inherent strength - it had been shaped by men and forces outside of Protestant control - and partly because a religious nationalism still remained fundamentally implausible in England. Philip Nicholls' 'History of the Twelve Men that were sent to spy out the Land of Canaan', which seemed an obvious invitation to a social adventure, turned out to be more a metaphor of the process of conversion. The 'land of promise' was to be attained by men 'obedient unto the voice of the Lord spoken by his prophets' and prepared to 'run headlong up into the top of the hill': it was obviously more a state of personal salvation than a holy nation.¹² With Protestantism so thinly-spread and Catholicism

11. Lever, op. cit., pp.142-3

12. Philip Nicholls, Here beginneth a godly new story of twelve men that Moses sent to spy out the land of Canaan, 1548, E5-8

and religious apathy so deeply-rooted it was difficult to advance beyond the faithful individual or individuals to England as the land of faith. Even when Protestant nationalism did operate within a biblical framework it confined itself to thoroughly English and secular aspirations (as in Lever's prophecy above) and for these there already existed a powerful and socially-accepted vocabulary. If a religious dimension could have been added to it the biblical idiom would have proved far more potent. For the moment English Protestants remained ordinary secular patriots, but the fact that some of them became so transparently so during the Marian exile is no indication that their whole orientation was secular.

Considerable parts of this chapter have been devoted to the various respects in which pre-Marian nationalism provides us with vital insights into the nature of Marian nationalism. Three points can be made in summary. First, the Protestant's patriotism was such an intense and independent force that he was inclined when necessary to compartmentalize it and isolate it from his Protestantism. Second, the language of this patriotism was the folk language of Englishness, though it was associated with, but not incorporated by, classical and biblical language, and this provided the Protestant with a valuable link with the secular world. Third, the secular nature of this language did not mean that its exponents were profane and un-Protestant.

The contrast with Scotland is striking and significant. Knox, as we have seen, spoke in enthusiastically secular terms in describing the wealth and peace that would accrue

to Scotland from a closer connection with England. But as a result of the overpowering shadow of England and France over Scotland Scottish patriotism tended to be ambiguous and for Protestants especially so during the English assaults of the 1540s. It was not obvious either to his enemies or probably to himself whether the Protestant was a Scot or a 'Scottish-Englishman'. And even if he was a Scot he was a member of a poor and defence-oriented nation rather than of an affluent and war-mongering 'Empire' like England. Scotland's secular success remained important, but it was hardly surprising that the main source of the interests and zeal of Protestant professionals like Knox became quite simply their Protestantism. This contrast between Scottish and English approaches was to become especially evident in the 1550s, when both countries faced national crises - England the problem of Spanish ambition and Scotland the threat of French imperialism. Indeed in attempting to reduce the ideological divisions of the 1550s to some kind of order it seems more reasonable at this stage to look for a division along English and Scottish lines rather than for a division within the ranks of the English reformers.

In the short term, in Edward the sixth's reign, the English Protestant's patriotic faith added to his more general sense of social alienation. Not merely was he constantly harassed and opposed by papists and idolators, but rebels and traitors seemed to threaten the whole order, prosperity and security of the English nation. Nor, as we shall see, was this the sum of his frustrations. In fact when he surveyed society in general its whole standards and behaviour seemed to be in disarray.

Chapter 3 Citizens and Saints

With their religion at least formally established in England it was natural that Protestants should have begun to concern themselves not merely with the battle with popery but also with the general state of moral behaviour in society. In this preoccupation they were undoubtedly influenced by the teachings of advanced reformers like Bucer, Zwingli, Bullinger and Calvin, who placed especial emphasis upon a renovated moral behaviour almost as the test of whether religious faith was valid or not. But Swiss moralism only reinforced the ordinary native yearnings of English Protestants. It helped to clarify answers that Protestants were already making to the perplexing and unusual problems that were affecting English society.

The sixteenth century was a time of immense structural changes in English society. It was a period of revolution in the wool industry, of greatly increasing trade, of vast new profits. The conversion of arable land to pasture, the enclosure of common land, the eviction of tenants, the phenomenon of rack-renting led to poverty and social dislocation. In this early capitalistic phase of English development extremes of poverty and wealth co-existed and with the wealth occurred a more permissive attitude to personal morality. The self-indulgent, dice-playing nobleman became a new social type. With prosperity the need for an ethic of hard work diminished and tendencies to sexual excess

probably increased, whilst among the lower classes permissive sexual behaviour probably continued to provide an outlet from the frustration of impoverishment. Though the evidence of Protestant 'hawks' is obviously not entirely to be trusted in this respect, it is likely that there was a concrete base for many of their accusations. It seems on the other hand that in respect of enclosures the Protestant complaints of the 1540s were mistakenly directed at a problem that had long since passed its peak. But whatever the defects of Protestant analysis the existence of acute economic discontent in this period is indisputable. A remarkable price inflation, a decline in the cloth trade and the cynical exploitation of appropriated monastic lands made Edward's reign a period of unusual social and economic crisis.¹

The radical Protestant reformers greeted this crisis with an obsessive outrage that took its source from biblical moralism and also from deeply-rooted mediaeval thought patterns which ascribed the explanation of problems to human wickedness rather than to the operation of impersonal processes, and which decried the existence of pleasure and indulgence in a society which lacked the economic base to afford them.² The reformers found a perfect idiom for the expression of their censorious anger in Old Testament prophecy. Indeed it must have seemed that some passages like the following had been especially sent by God for the benefit of his Edwardian Englishmen: 'Wo be unto you therefore that do join house unto house and couple one field to another so

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1. See Whitney R. Jones, *The Tudor Commonwealth, 1529-59*, London, 1970, pp.3-5
 2. See Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Articulate Citizen and the English Renaissance*, Durham, North Carolina, 1965, for an exploration into this pattern of thought and the movement away from it.

long as there is any ground to be had. Think you that you shall dwell upon the earth alone?'³ Thomas Becon's torrent of prophetic rage against the sinners of England was by no means atypical: 'The pride of these days is Lucifer-like, the covetousness is insatiable, the whoredom is monstrous ... and so forth of other vices ... so that it is truly said of St. John: "The world is altogether set on wickedness". They are corrupt and abominable in all their doings: there is not one that doeth good, no not one", saith David'.⁴ Writers drew the most pointed comparisons between the life of the spirit and its perverted frivolous counterparts in the society around them - between the 'filthy and trifling songs of drunken musicians' and the sweet music of God's preachers, between sumptuous and resplendent mansions - the dwelling places of the world - and the heavenly mansion of which St. Paul had spoken.⁵ In all these attacks Protestants utterly spurned compromise and seemed intent upon a total confrontation. 'How vehement and sharp,' wrote George Joye, 'were the prophets Elijah, Jeremiah and the other in rebuking and condemning sin? Compare your defence of adulterers to their sharp sermons and they agree as Belial and Christ.'⁶

But Protestants did not merely account for social and personal morality within a biblical framework. A secular frame of reference co-existed with it. This focussed on the notion of the commonwealth, which acted as a kind of

3. Crowley, op. cit., p.161

4. Becon, Catechism etc., op. cit., p.593

5. Ibid, p.430

6. Joye, A Contrary to a certain man's consultation that adulterers ought to be punished with death, C6

rallying-cry for these thinkers. Protestants chose to translate the 'politeia' (community) of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians as 'commonwealth' and the English idea of the commonwealth as a coherent and hierarchically-arranged social system was perfectly in accordance with biblical thinking. But the word commonwealth also possessed strong classical origins and theorists like Thomas Starkey and Sir Thomas Smith tended to seek its validation in a rational law of nature rather than in a revealed law of God.⁷ The concept of natural law of course had been absorbed into Christian culture, but what made the commonwealth vocabulary specifically secular was that it tended to operate as an autonomous value, as an ultimate and independent entity. It possessed indigenous roots in English culture extending at least as far back as the theories of John of Salisbury and the thirteenth century notion of the 'community of the realm'. Essentially it amounted to an assertion that the individual's 'private weal' should be subordinate to the 'public weal' of the whole community and that society should be upheld by stable and harmonious economic and social interrelationships.⁸ It was precisely this that the new individualistic, entrepreneurial spirit of the sixteenth century threatened to destroy and which Protestant reformers rallied to defend.

Thomas Becon, for instance, was clearly investing the commonwealth with a kind of extra-biblical ultimacy when he wrote: 'And the cause of all this wretchedness and beggary in the commonweal are the greedy gentlemen, which are sheep-mongers and graziers They by whom the commonweal was

7. Arthur B. Ferguson, 'The Tudor Commonweal and the Sense of Change' in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol.3, No.1, Nov. 1963, pp.18-21

8. *Ibid*, pp.11-35

sometime preserved are now become the caterpillars of the commonweal.... The state of England was never so miserable as it is at this present'.⁹ But it was not merely the normal social corrosive of greed that Protestants attacked in this way. They also incorporated their more rigid moral standards within the commonwealth framework. For George Joye, for instance, adultery became a kind of secular abomination. Adulterers were offenders against the 'public weal' and adultery was currently as great a corruption to all commonwealths as it had been in times past.¹⁰

Protestants frequently allowed the two vocabularies to complement each other and to provide alternative validations of the same social message. In complaining of the oppression of the poor by the rich Robert Crowley appealed to both the secular conscience and the religious conscience of the political authorities. 'Remember most Christian councillors' he wrote, 'that you are not only naturally members of one body with the poor creatures of this realm, but also by religion you are members of the same mystical body of Christ.'¹¹ The Bible provided the Protestant with a social standard, but it confirmed and reinforced attitudes that predated his Protestantism and echoed the folk wisdom of his profaner contemporaries. He spoke both as a social theologian and as a commonwealth man, as a saint and as a citizen, and violently castigated the rest of the community for its neglect of these ideals.

9. Becon, *Catechism*, op. cit., p.435

10. Joye, *A contrary etc.*, op. cit., A2-3, C6

11. Crowley, op.cit., p.169; see also Brinkelow, op.cit., p.32

This dereliction of social behaviour before long acquired deeper implications for Protestants. Religion and England's security were, as we have seen, sources of great anxiety to Edwardian reformers, but after 1553 they became sources of even deeper concern. With the rise of a Catholic, pro-Spanish regime the very survival of Protestantism and even of the Protestant nation seemed to be in serious jeopardy. In these circumstances the indulgence, greed and apathy which had so outraged Edwardian reformers became even more worrying. For they meant that most Englishmen were perplexingly indifferent to the crisis. It became one of the most important tasks of Marian ideologists to transform this indifference into a social concern for the fate of Protestantism and the nation.

In these circumstances the attitudes of Protestants to social behaviour began to change and it is interesting to note that the potentialities for this change were already evident in the literature of the Edwardian period. First, there were deeper implications in the secular notion of citizenship than Protestants were often inclined to make clear. Self-seeking may have been a denial of citizenship, but ultimately it was also a denial of patriotism. Citizenship was simply a low-key form of patriotism, a mundane rather than a grandiose promotion of the commonwealth. To some Protestants in Edward the sixth's reign - those who were inclined to become most excited about social problems - covetousness had obviously already become tantamount to a kind of treachery, a betrayal of the security of the nation. 'What may I liken it unto,' wrote one writer, 'when a few

men ... shall keep in their hands so much ground ... that thereby all their own native country shall come to utter ruin and decay.'¹² In Mary's reign this emphasis upon national rather than merely community betrayal gained ground. So too did the hope that the nation's betrayers might turn into the nation's saviours.

Other writers in the Edwardian period on the other hand reached behind social conduct to discover its religious implications - the implications of sainthood rather than citizenship. To Thomas Lever covetousness was not just a moral offence; in fact it was a religious abomination grosser than Catholicism: 'Papisty abused many things covetousness hath destroyed more: papistry is superstition, covetousness is Idolatry.'¹³ To other writers sin was a simple emanation from Catholicism, a consequence of attending the mass.¹⁴ Conversely, sainthood was a simple outgrowth of Protestant faith and Henry Brinkelow bitterly regretted that Christ's gospel had been so ignored that social behaviour was currently no better than in the time of the pope's law.¹⁵ So in Mary's reign Protestants were to complain not merely about unholy behaviour but also about the lack of a religious commitment to undergird conduct. If indulgence could be transformed not just into moral rectitude but also into Protestant zeal then the New Jerusalem might yet be transplanted onto English soil. But as we saw in an earlier chapter even this Protestant commitment could be accounted for in a secular idiom.¹⁶ In Edward's reign Nicholas Lesse

12. Piers Ploughman's Exhortation, A2-3

13. Lever, op. cit., p.95

14. Becon, Catechism etc., op. cit., p.451

15. Brinkelow, op. cit., p.10

16. See Section B, Chapter 1

spoke of theft, adultery, insurrection and other moral iniquities as works of Satan - a consequence of his cosmic betrayal of man's titles of redemption and justification. But these satanic acts had had secular effects. They had resulted in the 'overthrow of whole realms', the 'utter casting away and decay of commonwealths'.¹⁷ Lesse was summoning men not so much to be saints and Protestants as to be citizens and Protestants, or rather citizens and patriots, for Lesse was inclined to describe Protestantism as a form of patriotism, of service to the commonwealth. All this may seem unnecessarily confusing, but without an understanding of the mechanics of this linguistic juggling it is impossible to reduce Marian ideology to order. For Lesse's Marian successors were sometimes to have very oblique and unobvious ways of shaking Englishmen out of apathy and into Protestantism.

In this chapter I have tried once again to reach into the Edwardian background to discover the roots of an idea which was later to become of greater significance - in this case the attempt to depict ordinary immorality as a kind of betrayal of Protestantism and thenation. But at the same time important points have been made about the Edwardian situation. The Protestant reformers of this period frequently expressed the utmost rage and acrimony about the condition of social and personal morality in England. In the midst of an environment polluted by enemies - not merely 'worldlings' but also papists and traitors - the Protestant

17. Nicholas Lesse, 'An Apology' at conclusion of Philip Melanchthon, *The Justification of Man by Faith only*, trans. Lesse, L8

existed in a state of almost constant paranoia. Philip Nicholl's 'promised land' was sustained, as he well knew, by little more than a small Protestant elite group supported by a Protestant king and Protestant laws. The English reformer was obviously as socially (if not politically) alienated, as suspicious and as angry as Knox. In fact in some respects - the new changes in economic behaviour - he had to endure and react against even greater provocations than Knox. It was hardly surprising that like Knox he should have begun to speculate about the future outcome of his present predicaments and in view of the fact that these speculations helped to inspire him to militant action we should now briefly examine their nature.

Chapter 4 From Promised Land to Wasteland

For Protestants to have rooted their outlook in the horrifying tensions of the social present would have been to hover at the edge of a precipice of insanity. Somewhere there had to be a point of concord or completion to set against the rampant disharmonies of the society round about. The Protestant's personal faith, the reconciliation of the war in his own personality, now provided only a basic security rather than a total consolation. In his 'News out of Heaven' (1541) Thomas Becon had wooed his readers with a vision of an affluent paradise - a celestial city of pure gold, fine pearl and precious stones, a city with no need of the sun or moon to light it.¹ By the time of Edward's reign Becon and his generation were more concerned with a social future - with a social outcome to new social problems. John Hooper summarized exactly the new Edwardian dialectic of power, rejection and consequent calamity: 'Seeing now that God hath sent his word, His magistrates and His preachers into England, it is (take heed of it) a very token that the sins of England is ascended up into his sight, and that out of hand we amend, or suddenly to look for the most severe and cruel punishment of God'.²

Moods in this period oscillated frantically between the wildest optimism and the deepest despair. In a present

1. Becon, Early Works, op. cit., p.55

2. Hooper, op. cit., p.112

that offered the most blatant tensions and confusions it was virtually a psychological necessity to know that the immediate future offered only neatness - the neatness of a catastrophe or even the neatness of a miracle. 'The time is even now coming,' wrote Thomas Lever, 'when as God must needs either of his mercy here in England work such a wonderful miracle unto our comfort, as far passeth man's expectation; or else of his righteousness take such vengeance of this land as shall be to our utter destruction.' Several writers depicted the future in terms of a simple option - the option of God's blessing or God's cursing.³ But if Protestant hopes were sliding crazily on a see-saw of expectations they were more often weighed down by gloom than elevated by hope. A century later, and even during the Marian period, Puritan idealists became animated by hopes of an imminent millennium. The pursuit of the 'New Jerusalem' was more than a 'creed for cranks'; it acted as a cause as well as a consequence of the Civil War.⁴ But Edwardian Protestants were more concerned with the preservation of their fragile religious gains. They wanted England rid of the ungodly and feared the collapse of what one of them described as their 'city of God'.⁵ At this stage only alienated Anabaptists like John Champneys were prepared to indulge in dispensationalist solutions concerning the return of Christ and his reign in an earthly

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3. Lever, op. cit., p.55; George Joye, A present consolation for the sufferers of persecution for righteousness, Cl; Becon, Catechism etc., op. cit., p.617
 4. William M. Lamont, Godly Rule: Politics and Religion, 1603-60, London, 1969, p.97
 5. William Turner, A new dialogue wherein is contained the examination of te mass, A3

Jerusalem: 'And when it is said that they shall be burned in one day: that signifieth that they shall be utterly confounded now at this present time, in the appearance of the second coming of Christ ... so that iniquity shall be taken out of the earth and righteousness shall reign among the people.'⁶ However, the apocalypse of Daniel continued as a vital undercurrent in the Protestant consciousness. The feeling that history was drawing to a crucial phase, towards a final resolution sustained a well-established Protestant tradition. Towards the end of his 'Exposition of Daniel the Prophet', based upon the writings of Melancthon, Oecolampadius and Pellican, George Joye delivered an exact chronology of the 'last days' - a time when God would 'slay the antichristian horned whore of Babylon with the almighty breath of his mouth'.⁷ Mythologies of the fate of persecutors after the 'last days', of a time of 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' when the Roman Church would be consigned to a 'bottomless pit' or an 'everlasting fire' were fairly frequent in the works of the Edwardian reformers.⁸

However, these fantasies, though drastic, were unlikely to be totally satisfying. The negative side of the apocalypse tended to stress an everlasting calamity outside of time. Its positive aspect at least anticipated a future for England (in its new form of Jerusalem) in a time occurring after time. It was good to know that Catholics would be

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6. John Champneys, *The Harvest is at hand, wherein the tares shall be cast into the fire and burnt*, 1548, F6-7
 7. Joye, *The exposition of Daniel the prophet*, 1545, p.244
 8. Veron, *op. cit.*, B8-C1; Brinkelow, *op. cit.*, p.80; Becon, *Early Works*, *op. cit.*, p.55; Bale, *op. cit.*, p.360; Thomas Sampson, *Preface to translation of 'A sermon made by John Chrysostom'*, A3-4

destroyed and that flames would eternally leap around Catholic heads, but it was natural that this new generation of socially-oriented Protestants should want to indulge themselves in greater details of the actual exit of the ungodly from English society. For this more mainstream Old Testament prophecies provided ample inspiration. The pages of Edwardian Protestant ideology were hence littered with descriptions of pestilence, famine, dearth, strife, battle, and slaughter. Antony Gilby was already displaying the exceptional interest in these subjects which he was later to demonstrate with Knox at Geneva and which had perhaps been partially aroused in the first place by Genevan literature, but his talent in prophecy was shared to a slightly lesser degree by many others.⁹

Thus, as in Scotland, anticipation was generally expressed in a biblical and prophetic idiom, though it resulted from tensions that were secular as well as religious. In England, unlike Scotland, other modes of description were available to Protestants and were occasionally employed. Expectations of the 'utter desolation of the commonweal' or of an England more flourishing than any other nation on earth could carry their own momentum, their own secular dynamic.¹⁰ But the Bible captured the urgent mood of these Protestant ideologists more effectively than any other source of inspiration. It was a measure of the intensity of the pressures on English society that calamity and violent destruction played such a prominent role in its

9. Nicholls, *op. cit.*, C3; Gilby, *op. cit.*, Y2

10. Piers Ploughman's Exhortation, B6; Becon, *Early Works*, *op. cit.*, p. 174

official rhetoric. For all their repetitiveness these threats never acquired the staleness of a convention. There was a constant stress upon the imminence of disaster, almost a surprise that it had failed yet to occur. For it was a function of England's unique degeneracy that catastrophe was no more than around the corner. 'The realm of England, above all other realms under the sun, hath most rightfully deserved to be plagued and that very shortly,' wrote Henry Brinkelow.¹¹ To Robert Crowley the terrible judgement of God' was 'at hand'; there was 'no doubt of it'.¹² Catastrophe was thus not merely imminent it was also inevitable. Thomas Becon surrounded by 'rich worldlings', 'bellied hypocrites', 'purgatory-makers' and 'idle bellies' asked 'Can these things escape unplagued?'¹³ And another author demanded 'After so manifest admonition by the preachers what can follow but the just vengeance of God?'¹⁴

But the future was less settled for Edwardian prophets than they sometimes implied it to be. They frequently overplayed their desperation in order to threaten their hearers into repentance.¹⁵ They were attempting to avert disaster rather than simply to describe it. I suggested before that the new Protestant militancy and violence of this period grew out of a sense of social alienation in the present and visions of settlement in the future. This is there-

11. Brinkelow, op. cit., pp.74-5

12. Crowley, op. cit., p.108

13. Becon, Catechism, etc., op. cit., p.238

14. Piers Ploughman's Exhortation, B5

15. Thomas Lever's sermons, for instance, are full of demands for repentance.

fore something of an over-simplification. For though Protestants might fight and struggle for the anticipated defeat of God's enemies, they were more likely to fight and struggle against the type of total calamity which most of them expected - a calamity which would have turned England's green and pleasant land into an Old Testament wasteland. Because the social stakes were as high as this, there was obviously every prospect that God's instruments in England might have to enact a lesser plague in order to forestall God's greater plagues. One writer for instance envisaged that God would somehow invest England with a kind of nausea for its polluted elements; 'I shall cast pestilence upon thee, with famine, poverty, fevers, swellings, cold, heat, burnings, corrupt air, blastings, and with battle shalt thou be consumed until they land now so fertile and pleasant hath spewed thee forth altogether...'¹⁶

Protestants believed that corrosives were currently eating away at English society and might be on the point of producing its dissolution. There could hardly be a greater incentive for a militant rescue-operation. It was a perspective which was different in some respects to Knox's in Scotland, for Knox anticipated victory over a more monolithic force, the 'kingdom of darkness', which had already perverted Scottish society, but might yet be prevented from destroying it. But the urgency of the situation in England suggested that Protestants might invoke forms of action that would be hardly less dynamic than those employed in Scotland. It was fortunate nevertheless in this

16. Joye, A present consolation etc., op. cit., C1

respect that England's regime happened to be Protestant and we must therefore now examine why English Protestants were anxious to conceive their crusade as a constitutional one.

Chapter 5 Two Faces of Protestant Politics

(1) Protestantism and Constitutionalism

Protestants in England faced a range of problems different in significant respects from those of Scotland. But their response to them was similarly blunt and uncompromising, and their expectations for the future, like those of Scottish Protestants, focussed on the hope of a drastic and sudden release. There was a pent-up tension, an urgency in this essentially revolutionary psychology that suggested a bloodbath or at the least a minor carnage virtually as its logical outgrowth. This much English and Scottish Protestants had in common, but their ways were to diverge significantly as to how and how quickly the purge of their enemies would occur. Fundamentally this was due to the fact that each stood in a very different relation to the political world.

In Scotland the Protestant crusade against its enemies went forward comparatively regardless of the established political authorities. Protestants found themselves in opposition to a succession of Catholic regimes. The weakness of these regimes and the only qualified respect in which Scots held them gave Protestants the courage to take the political initiative into their own hands and even to confront, criticize and fight against political authority. In England on the other hand Protestantism's relationship with

the political establishment was one of association rather than opposition. The schism with Rome had been cemented by an impressive array of statutes, Henry the eighth's attitude to prominent Protestants was tolerant and with Edward the sixth's accession an overtly Protestant regime came into existence. Underlying this religious harmony was an enormous native respect, indeed religious reverence for authority. The continental Protestant ideology of obedience to the 'higher powers' found little echo in Scottish political behaviour, but in England it dignified and sanctified an existing reality.¹ Englishmen and Protestants regarded the monarchy as the condition of England's wealth, power and cohesion. It was the linch-pin of the whole social order and its destruction seemed to threaten the complete dissolution not merely of political but also of social bonds - a crazy Hobbesian-like state of nature like that imagined by Thomas Becon in the following passage. 'Without this regiment and governance of the high powers no public weal can remain in safe estate, no friendship can be maintained, no faith can be regarded, no order can be kept, no propriety of goods can be saved, no virtue can reign, no tranquillity can consist, nor any goodness continue; but all must needs grow out of order, and, as they say, go to havoc, unto the great disquietness and utter destruction of so many as dwell in such wild, rustic and beast-like realm, where no civility of public order in mundane things is observed.'²

1. See Baumer, *op. cit.*

2. Becon, *Early Works*, *op. cit.*, p.211

The English Protestant's attachment to his religion and to the English commonwealth hence co-existed with his loyalty to the king and laws of England. In fact it was the official policy of the council that Protestants should allow the king and the laws to act as arbiters of these other byalties: 'It is not a private man's duty to alter ceremonies, to innovate orders in the Church, nor yet is it a preacher's part to bring that in contempt and hatred which the prince doth either allow or is content to suffer.... It is the part of a godly man not to think himself wiser than the King's majesty and his council'.³ Moreover, some radical Protestants seemed at times unwilling to admit that there could be anything but an automatic correspondence between ordinary legal enactments and the divine law. 'It is very offensive,' wrote Peter Martyr, 'to the king's counsellors and to very many others both among the nobility and commonalty that a decree publicly received should be found fault with as ungodly and condemned as though it were at variance with the sacred writings.'⁴ But there was a certain extemporare carelessness about Martyr's statement and it is certain that the following principle of Thomas Cole reflected the considered Protestant position: 'the word of God doth not allow any man to condemn or dislike any public order set forth by his superiors, authorized thereunto, which order is consonant to the word of God, whether it be in ceremonies or anything appertaining to godly religion.'⁵ But if radical Protestants did not

3. The copy of a letter sent to all those preachers which the king's majesty hath licenced to preach, 1548, A5-6

4. Original Letters, op. cit., Vol.2, P.487

5. Thomas Cole, A godly and fruitful sermon, London, 1553, C6 (my italics)

believe that public decrees and the laws of God were clasped in a kind of unshakable embrace it is certain that by the time of the Prayer Book of 1552 all Edwardian radicals held that the legal proceedings of the Edwardian regime could be generally if not quite always relied upon to be 'consonant to the word of God'. Time and again in this period Thomas Lever employed a dual standard of validation - 'the laws of God and the realm'. The process of enclosure, the misuse of abbey and chantry lands, the failure to endow universities and grammar schools, the neglect of the poor - all were offences not merely against God but against specific acts of parliament.⁶ Because of this the Protestant viewed his status in society as the product of a dual commission - a commission from God and also from the king. Preachers were 'lawfully sent of the high powers and called thereunto by the secret motion of God's spirit in their hearts'.⁷ And the joys of public office of course consisted not merely in obedience to the king's Protestant commands, but in appointment by an honourable and socially respectable procedure and in the simple pleasure of service to England's lawful king.

The deep faith of English Protestants in England's legal and political procedures conditioned the whole nature of Protestant action in the Edwardian period. It meant that unlike their Scottish counterparts English Protestants would tend to look towards the normal political channels to ward off God's plagues and rid the nation of its enemies.

6. Lever, op. cit., pp. 39, 81, 96, 120, 123, 128

7. Becon, Catechism, etc., op. cit., p.596

Obviously the Protestantism of Edwardian governments tended to arouse the constitutional instincts of Protestants, but, as we have seen, these instincts predated Protestantism. They owed their source to England's institutional richness, continuity and centralization. Under the Edwardian regime Protestants' civic and religious instincts complemented one another. But what would happen in a situation in which they contradicted each other? How would these disparate loyalties be resolved under a regime like Mary Tudor's, which was legal in the ordinary English sense, but which broke every rule in the Protestant Bible? Here again the period before 1553 can provide us with valuable insights into the events of the later period. For the Henrician exile was a kind of low-key prototype of the Marian exile - a period when the responsibilities of the Protestant as Protestant and as subject fell into conflict. Of course the fact that Protestants went into exile seems to suggest that they simply opted for their religion and rejected royal jurisdiction. It was precisely this however that the Henrician exiles refused to admit. Intensely anxious that the king and constitution should not become absorbed into the general alienation they felt towards the degraded society around them, they clung desperately to their status as establishment figures.

As we have seen, it was William Turner's intention in this period to effect a religious polarization in society by pointing out just how little of popery had been banished - the pope's supremacy and financial power, but not Catholic

doctrine or ceremonial.⁸ But Turner also claimed that this had occurred in specific defiance of the king's own policy. 'Your godly purpose,' Turner told Henry, 'is and ever hath been since ye knew his conditions to drive this beast out of all places of your dominion.' And Turner's exposure of the 'Romish fox' would facilitate the execution of this purpose.⁹ Henry the eighth, in short, had been, was and would continue to be Protestant. Moreover, from this outrageous claim, Turner, with a cunning worthy of the Romish fox he was hunting, proceeded to identify not merely the king but also the whole structure of English law with the Protestant cause. Protestantism was associated with the English establishment not in any partial or peripheral way but in a fully legal and constitutional sense. In view of the fact that English law as it stood offered only the most minor concessions to Protestant demand, that the Catholic Act of Six Articles still stood as a bane on the Protestant horizon, such a task demanded both impudence and deftness. Turner accomplished his task with an equivocation that established him as the most subtle controversialist on the Protestant side.

This excursion into English law was later intensified by the fact that Turner's hunting of the Romish fox provoked from Stephen Gardiner, the leading Catholic protagonist, a speedy rescue-operation on behalf of the victim of Turner's blood sport. Gardiner claimed that the beast which, according to Turner, Henry had commanded to be driven from

8. See above Section B, Chapter 1, note 15

9. Turner, the hunting, etc., op. cit., A3

England was in fact Henry's own 'red deer' and also 'good order' and 'good politic laws'.¹⁰ This counter-charge struck at one of the roots of the Protestant's secular conscience, but it was not a new issue raised by Gardiner in order to embarrass Turner. Rather it was a defence against Turner's already obvious determination to publicize his civic purity. Catholics, Turner rightly claimed, tended to justify the legality of their doctrine by this claim: 'we take them not for the pope's ceremonies and ordinances, for the king hath commanded in a certain proclamation that no man shall from the time of that proclamation be so hardy to call the ceremonies and ordinances that were in the Church at that time the pope's ordinances and ceremonies'.¹¹ But Turner was determined to believe in the 'whole pope', not Henrician Catholicism, and he produced an answer that might have carried away even some of the less naive of his readers, and quite possibly also its author. In short, what seemed to be royal proclamations were not royal at all. What Catholics regarded as a compliment in fact amounted to the impertinence of calling Henry a plagiarist. To make Henry the author of Catholic doctrine was as if 'the king of Portugal should command in a proclamation that Aristotle and Plato's works should no longer be called Aristotle's and Plato's but his works'. If the King of Portugal could thus masquerade as a creative philosopher, the King of Denmark could become a Mosaic law-giver and the King of France pass off his military trivia for the conquests

10. Turner, The rescuing, etc., op. cit., B3

11. Turner, The hunting etc., op. cit., C1

of Alexander the Great. If Catholic claims were correct Henry the eighth had become pope and presumably been transported from Hampton Court to the Vatican. Catholic pretensions were not merely false but ludicrous.¹²

It was obvious to everyone but Protestants that Henry in his kingdom could corroborate, recognize and institutionalize Catholic beliefs, even if he was not their ultimate source, but it was precisely with this issue that Turner refused to engage. He was prepared to adopt the straightforward argument that Catholic proclamations were erroneous because they violated the Word of God, but the focal point of his argument was equally that they were erroneous because they were neither royal nor constitutional. Turner's civic consciousness was so acute that it was not sufficient to accept Henry's acquiescence in the promotion of Catholic doctrine and then to look for excuses for it. Henry had to be revealed as an anti-pope. In this sort of ideas-system constitutional enactments ceased to be erroneous and contrary to God's will, even occasionally. If they were unacceptable they were simply not enactments at all. Consider, for example, how Turner overcame the embarrassment of the Act of Six Articles. 'The Six Articles,' he wrote, 'and your catechism which is called the King's Book is of your making as every man can tell that hath heard you preach or hath read your other writings, and yet ye set not your name to them, and so under the visor of the king's acts and the king's books ye cover and set out, nay by force violently thrust into all men's hands, yea and into the Church of Christ

12. Ibid

even up to the pulpit your Popish conjurings, foolish dreams, rotten ceremonies, and idle ordinances....¹³

Turner was clearly determined to operate with two conceptual frameworks - the law of England and the law of God. Gardiner's 'rescue of the fox' therefore drove him not to an embarrassed silence but to an equally strident if more careful defence of his constitutional decency. He now bypassed the conceptual tangle of what was English law and what was not simply to demonstrate that he was no law-breaker of what actually existed as statute: 'I never in all my life wrote against one politic law.... What politic law is it to command all the people of a realm to kneel before a piece of molten or casten silver, to creep to it, and to kiss it and to sing *Crucem tuam adoramus Domine*'.¹⁴ Though he had denied the legality of the Six Articles, in the expository parts of his work Turner had steered a safe path clear of major doctrines like transubstantiation, concentrating rather on the vast accretions of Catholic ceremonial that had been given no statutory form by the Reformation. Here, unlike in his first position, Turner could feel surer of himself as a good subject, for he violated not what others claimed was English law and he claimed was not, but rather what in reality had never been law.

If Protestants were good subjects, it followed that Catholics must be traitors. Turner claimed that Catholics hoped for the king's death in order that they might sup-

13. Turner, *The Rescuing etc.*, op. cit., N.5 (my italics)

14. *Ibid*, B3

press the English Bible during a royal minority and implied that the pope was no less than a potential regicide. It was also treasonable for Catholics to claim that it was not the pope's learning and ordinances that the king had commanded to be driven from England. 'In saying so,' Turner wrote, 'ye say that the king would not have the pope's false usurped power banished out of the realm, which among all other devilish doctrine and ordinances of the pope, is one pestilent popish ordinance.'¹⁵ Though Turner had elsewhere denied the legality of post-Reformation Catholic acts, in confining his definition of treachery to denials of the king's supremacy over religion he could be sure of standing on solid legal ground. But the logic of treachery was in fact fundamentally simple: 'Every defender of Antichrist is Christ's enemy and the king's. But ye are a defender of Antichrist. Therefore ye are Christ's enemy and the king's.'¹⁶ Other writers of the Henrician exile were equally forthright about Catholic treason and conspiracy. John Bale claimed that Henry's civil officers were shackled by an intelligence service of ecclesiastical 'watchmen'.¹⁷ And Henry Brinkelow's accusation was simple and devastating. 'Ye look for the death of the king,' he wrote.¹⁸

Turner's constitutional claims tended to be more extreme than those of the other exiles, but his contemporaries grappled with equal determination and with an ingenuity hardly less subtle with the issue of Protestant legality. For Henry Brinkelow this legality consisted in the incipient

15. Turner, *The hunting etc.*, op. cit., A6

16. Turner, *The Rescuing etc.*, op. cit., N7

17. Bale, op. cit., pp.222, 172

18. Brinkelow, op. cit., p.54

Protestantism of the king. Henry was not as yet exactly pure and Protestant, but rather like a proletarian who was to be implicitly trusted soon to reveal his 'real will'. Henry's current political stance was the product of a combination of ignorance and unfair pressurizing. England's mighty king might have been surprised to hear that he was currently hardly monarch at all, but rather the tool of a Catholic faction: 'whereas the king was before but a shadow of a king, or at the most but half a king, now he doth wholly reign through their preaching, writing and suffering'.¹⁹ But king and parliament could be virtually divested of responsibility for their actions, for, as Brinkelow repeatedly emphasized, they had been 'bewitched' by Satanic forces.²⁰ Once the unfortunate king knew the true state of affairs all would be well. 'I trust,' Brinkelow wrote, 'that every day more and more his grace shall spy their popish intents.'²¹

John Bale too was prepared to admit on occasions that Protestants had not yet completely won the battle for Henry the eighth's soul. He prayed that God would 'open thoroughly the eyes of our most worthy and noble king'.²² But even marginal reservations of this kind were uncommon in Bale's writings. Henry had emulated the 'most godly example of king Josiah' in utterly destroying the sinful temples of his realm. The dissolution of the monasteries, the despoil-

19. Ibid, p.57

20. Ibid, pp.57, 107-10

21. Ibid, p.36

22. Bale, The Epistle exhortatory of an English Christian unto his dearly beloved country of England, 1544, p.2

ing of shrines and images were indeed a triumph for Protestantism, but they were only a partial fulfillment of Protestant expectations. Bale in fact pointed out that his 'godly history' had not been completely re-enacted, for the 'idolatrous priests' had not been burnt upon their 'abominable shrines'. But the reason why Bale's kingly iconoclast had only half-finished his job was not because his perceptions were impure but only because his power was imperfect. 'I doubt it not at all,' wrote Bale, 'but his most noble discretion perceiveth much more in that wicked generation ... than he ever in his life yet uttered.'²³ And in a characteristic burst of political optimism Bale forecast that the Reformation would in fact be duly completed by royal leadership. 'Praise be unto the eternal Lord,' he wrote, 'for that he hath wrought already by your most victorious Jehoshaphat ... such a full Josiah shall ye have if ye be thankful as will perfectly restore the laws as yet corrupted.'²⁴

The Henrician exiles were imaginative, adept and utterly enthusiastic in presenting their political loyalty. But what their statements appeared to mean was by no means necessarily what they actually meant. Half-truths and ambiguities are the classical weapons of ideologists. And it has to be admitted that it was politically useful to the exiles to attach the label of treachery to their political opponents, to invite Henry the eighth to rid himself of his popish shackles and reveal himself as

23. Bale, Works, op. cit., p.59

24. Bale, Yet a course at the Romish fox, Zurich, 1543, B3

the Protestant giant he already was, and to depict their own political record as entirely impeccable. On the other hand if tactical considerations were in fact uppermost in the minds of Protestants it might have been more appropriate for them to have concentrated their attentions on the nobility rather than on the king. Henry the eighth's efforts for Protestantism had been minimal and to depict him as a Protestant partisan, as the exiles did, was more likely to alienate him than to win him. Perhaps, however, Protestants exploited the tactic of royalism because they were deluded about Henry's religious character. But the most likely source of any such delusion was the English Protestant's perennial faith in the monarchy - a monarchy which had wooed him not merely with its secular power and grandeur but also with its magnificent defiance of the Antichrist of Rome and his monkish cohorts in England. The tempo of religious progress had subsequently slackened, but a temporary withdrawal into exile could hardly expunge the English Protestant's determination to be both a Protestant and the king's subject. And Edward the sixth's ensuing Protestant regime was of course to provide a triumphant vindication of this determination. In view of this it seems difficult to dismiss Turner's myth of the Protestant constitution with its elaborate and utterly improbable enclosing web of fable as simply a massive confidence trick. It is perfectly conceivable that Turner found the utmost difficulty in reconciling himself to the fact that he had ceased in English terms to be an obedient, orderly and respectable citizen, that he was convinced, or nearly so,

by his own arguments. After 1553 Protestants like Turner were to be confronted by a regime that posed far greater threats than that of the 1540s and that presented a greater challenge to their constitutional purity. It was only then that both the strength and the vulnerability of this purity were revealed.

(2) Godly Rule

The roots of this vulnerability reached deep into the pre-Marian period. For Protestant political perspectives had always been ambiguous. Protestants were not merely subjects but also Protestants. Mary as monarch was to invite the loyalty of her Protestant subjects, but as a Catholic she could only provoke their opposition. In the tussle of these conflicting claims it was of considerable importance that Protestants encountered Mary's regime not merely with their loyalty to constitutional authority reinforced by the previous reign but with an experience of godly rule fresh in their minds. I explained before how the disparate standards of the laws of God and the laws of the realm came to act as a dual validation of political behaviour in Edward's reign. But in the blossoming Protestant enthusiasm of the period there was also an increasing tendency for political phenomena to be encapsulated in simple biblical categories. This was the enthusiasm for godly rule rather than for the 'king's proceedings', for a sanctified reality over and above an ordinary native reality.

In no respect was this more evident than in the adulation of Edward the sixth. Edward was a child made in their

own image by elderly divines. Lacking experience in the effects of idealism, he could even occasionally outstrip and surprise his 'creators' in the doctrinaire rigidity of his decisions, as, for example, when he refused to allow his sister Mary to celebrate the mass in private.²⁵ Most effluent of the Protestant panegyrics on Edward was the poetry in which he became a type of Christ. 'He is too good for that ungracious realm,' wrote William Baldwin.²⁶ Thomas Lever constructed a whole sermon around this particular motif. Thousands in England 'past all other hope and refuge' followed Edward and his council just as the crowds in the wilderness had followed Christ and his apostles. Edward in his benevolent dispersal of benefices and other rewards was like Christ in his distribution of the loaves and fishes. 'I in handling of this miracle,' wrote Lever, 'will apply the wonderful great charitable provision of Christ unto the King's majesty.'²⁷ But this virtual Christ reincarnate also possessed an extra godly facet to his personality that ensured the allegiance of this particular generation of Protestants. John Ponet wrote of how God had bestowed on Edward 'in such a dark world, in so tender age, such clear light of Christ that, albeit in this world he was poor, low, despised and crucified, your majesty is so rich, so high, in so high honour and all kinds of felicity.'²⁸

25. See Hester Chapman, *The Last Tudor King: A Study of Edward V I*, London, 1958, pp.205-8

26. William Baldwin, *The funerals of king Edward the sixth*, B3; See also Sir John Cheke, *A Royal Elegy*, C2

27. Lever, *op. cit.*, pp.64, 74-5

28. Ponet, Preface to translation of 'A tragedy or dialogue of the unjust, usurped primacy of the Bishop of Rome by Bernardino Ochino, 1549, A2

England's Christ-like king possessed qualities not merely of meekness but also of power. This was natural to his status as monarch, but it also reflected the new Protestant emphasis on power - the power that made it possible to react against the tensions in society. The same concept of a king at once amiable and formidable was conveyed in John Hooper's statement that if Edward lived and grew up with his present virtues of 'piety and sweetness of disposition' he would become a 'terror to all the sovereigns of the earth'.²⁹ Other writers compared the king's ferocity to that of the biblical kings Josiah and Hezekiah³⁰ and in fact in Protestant literature Edward was as often referred to as Josiah as he was called Edward. In Protestant minds Edward had clearly become not so much monarch of England as king of a new Israel.

Hence when John Bale came to write his equally frantic reply to the 'frantic papist of Hampshire' who had engaged in a verbal and physical scuffle with him, it was not to his treachery against Edward but to his blasphemy that Bale referred. 'Double is the blasphemy', he wrote, 'of this furious papist against the king's highness, in that he hath disdainfully called him both poor and a child, in contempt of his most Christian proceedings.' Bale's Catholic opponent also claimed that Edward when he came of age would revert to Catholicism and Bale correctly realized that this allegation extended beyond the king to attack the foundations of godly rule in England. 'This not only toucheth

29. Original Letters, op. cit., Vol.1, p.82, Vol.2, p.719

30. R.V., The old faith of Great Britain, B1; John Veron, Certain little treatises, 1548, H3

the king's most worthy majesty,' he wrote, 'which is God's high minister, in judging him childish, mutable and inconstant, but also it pierceth his most honourable council, which are under him, as was Joseph in Egypt, the stays of his people ... as consorting to the same. So is God's tabernacle by him blasphemed.' This defence of the royal council entirely transcended its ordinary secular and English reality. It was a tabernacle of the Almighty, comparable to Joseph among the Israelites, and no less than Christ himself occupied its midst. For Bale authority in England had conformed itself to the sanctified realities of sacred history and in the following statement the secular category (England) appeared only as an afterthought. 'Our said second and valiant Josiah,' Bale wrote, 'hath thus purged this Judah (his England I mean) from the abominable buggaries and idolatries of the great Baal Peor of Rome.'³¹

Not merely king and council were involved in these new attitudes, but also the whole Edwardian political system. William Turner's desperate attempts before 1547 to reconcile two standards confronting him from different angles disappeared in his new godly claim to be a 'sworn citizen of the city of God'. Turner undoubtedly retained his dedication to English citizenship and the laws of the king, but in the Edwardian situation these could be absorbed within the more glorious authority of the divine law and its law-maker, Christ. 'The enemies of the city are they,' Turner

31. Bale, An expostulation or complaint against the blasphemies of a frantic papist of Hampshire, B2,B4,A3

explained, 'which take away by violence the godly and necessary ordinances of our city and would by force thrust into our city laws of their own making contrary unto the law-maker which builded our city and died for the liberty of the same.'³² In a similar fashion it was a trial previously strange to ordinary English legal practice that William Punt described in his satire of the 'Indictment of Mother Mass'. The witnesses in this trial were Simon Peter, Andrew and the rest of the twelve apostles, and the defendant Mother Mass. The latter was accused in the name of the king of treason, theft and murder, but the king turned out not to be the king of England but the king of heaven. Moreover God was to act as judge in the trial, but Punt was apparently so confident of the sanctification of English legal practice which had occurred under Edward that he located the trial firmly within an English context. God's court room was thus the 'session house' and Mother Mass was to be 'laid fast in Newgate'. Likewise the court crier spoke in characteristically English intonations: 'Oyez, Simon Peter and Andrew come forth at your calling'. But these words were uttered by no ordinary English court official. The crier, one of the most prominent actors in the whole drama, turned out to be none other than Daniel the prophet.³³

Indeed one of the most notable features of the Edwardian political system was that many of its members spoke with the voice of prophecy. We have already noted how this

32. Turner, A new dialogue etc., op. cit., A3

33. William Punt, A new dialogue called the indictment of Mother Mass, 1548, A2, A6-B3

role became a commonplace amongst Edwardian radicals, but there exists a prevalent myth about the churchmen of this period that they were essentially public servants, subservient to the monarch and duly constituted authority. Yet even with some of the most strident exponents of common order there obviously existed a potentiality for a more independent role should the bases of their public loyalty begin to crumble. This can most clearly be illustrated by the case of Thomas Cole. Preaching at Maidstone before his metropolitan, Cranmer, this public servant 'par excellence' proclaimed 'whosoever therefore, either in ceremonies or godly religion, doth not conform himself to the common order, choosing ceremonies and doctrines of their own invention, are authors of sects'. Yet at the beginning of his sermon Cole had treated his hearers to a five-minute oration on prophecy, announcing in the process his own assumption of the prophetic mantle: 'although Isaiah speaketh not unto you, but a sinful man, one unworthy to bear Isaiah's books after him ... yet because it hath pleased our heavenly father to call me at this time to this place, truly without colour to speak his truth, I shall desire you in the name of God to be diligent hearers ... I am bold at this instant through the permission of God to open my mouth in the truth'. But in speaking of preaching similes of public service also came automatically to Cole's lips: 'As the mouth of the king's ambassador is ... the very mouth of the king, so the mouth of the preacher ... is the mouth of God....'³⁴ It might be supposed that this membership of a largely corrupt politico-ecclesiastical establishment meant

34. Cole, op. cit., C6, A2-5

that Cole's claims to prophecy were purely formal, that his prophecy had been tamed and domesticated. But we saw before how other prophets, some of whom occupied official positions more important than Cole's, performed the same abrasive role in society as their Hebrew prototypes. Indeed in the imagination of some reformers the whole Edwardian Church was becoming a kind of institutionalized prophecy. 'Behold,' wrote Philip Nicholls, 'now appeareth those marvellous things that Isaiah speaketh of so earnestly For the wisdom of the wise shall perish and the understanding of the witty shall hide itself. But wherefore happeneth this? No man can open it more plain than the prophet doth himself. ... After this will I pour out my spirit (saith Joel) upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.....'³⁵ It is highly significant that despite the emphasis placed upon the proper licencing of preachers by Edwardian governments reformers spoke far more often of their prophetic than of their ordinary legal role.³⁶ With their speedy exit from public office on Mary's accession many Protestants may have temporarily felt that they had become jobless, but redeployment or rather the utilization of the godly element within their old employment - namely prophecy - was still abundantly possible. And, perhaps even more important, there was also the Protestant's other and secular idealism - his patriotism. It was the Edwardian regime which had given

35. Nicholls, The Copy of a letter sent to one master Crispin of Exeter, A6

36. Thomas Becon's statements (note 7 above) was comparatively atypical of the radical Protestant group.

prophecy the scope to operate and gain its confidence. In this and the other ways we have noted godly rule created a legacy which any future regime would have to reckon with. Indeed the forces of religious idealism were so powerful that some Protestants were even beginning to invest the Edwardian political system with a sanctity not normally possessed by its Hebrew model. Edward himself was such an appropriate apex to his godly order that the usual division of role between king and prophet might be obliterated. William Baldwin, for instance, prayed that God would invest Edward with the 'gift of prophecy' in addition to the spiritual and temporal offices he already enjoyed.³⁷ English politics would then become prophetic politics.

This enthusiasm for the godly rule of Edwardian England meant that Mary's obviously ungodly rule might lead to an unbearable sense of outrage amongst Protestants. But it was not merely the potentiality for a future protest that existed, for Protestants were able to bring to Mary Tudor's reign an actual experience of political protest concerning the more ungodly areas of Henrician and Edwardian politics. Notable in this respect were the stringent criticisms of political officials in which many Protestants indulged. Loyalty to the processes of order could not obscure the fact that with the exceptions of Edward himself and a handful of councillors, bishops and preachers English officialdom was obvious fodder for Protestant denunciation. And to the preachers in their role of prophets rather than public servants there was no question that any class of persons,

37. Baldwin, *The Canticles or Ballads of Solomon*, 1549, A3

including politicians, should be allowed to enjoy exemption from criticism. John Hooper expressed his nausea for flatterers in the courts of princes - men who held up 'Yea and Nay as the wind bloweth'. The prophet's role by contrast was completely unambiguous: 'If their offence be hurtful and slanderous to the word of God, and pernicious to the commonwealth, the preacher of God's word must not dissemble to correct it by the word of God plainly, without colour or circumlocution, as Nathan did David; Elijah Ahab; John Herod. For that that is spoken to all men, is as though it were spoken to no man.' Of course to any prophet who felt a need to engage in thunderous rebuke in the very highest quarters Edward the sixth was a serious disappointment, for England's prophet-king was liable on occasion to expound the law even to his own preachers. This did not mean, however, that Edward could be passed over in a kind of benign neglect, for the forte of the prophet was interference, an interference based upon a fundamental mistrust and belief that human behaviour had to be constantly cajoled and admonished in order to remain untarnished. Thus for all his glorification of Edward, Hooper concluded his 'Sermons on Jonah' on a note of dire warning to the king. 'If your majesty do these things,' he wrote, 'the blood of the people shall be required at your hands. ...if not the king of Nineveh with his people shall rise at the latter day and condemn both king and council to death.'³⁸

Remarks of this kind were obviously fairly occasional

38. Hooper, op. cit., pp.435, 407, 558

in Edward's ⁶⁰reign and they are important to us mainly as illustrations of a critical potentiality within the Protestant mind with regard to kingship. They represented a prophetic clarity breaking through the unctuous respect which the monarchy often commanded. More common in Edward's reign and of equal importance for the future were attacks upon officers under the king. We have already examined the Protestant denunciation of the nobility for their Catholicism and covetousness, but it was of even greater significance when the nobility were attacked as politicians rather than merely citizens. In Mary's reign some Protestants were to conclude that Mary had forfeited her right to reign or even that she had never been queen in that she exercised royal power but lacked divine authority. And though the monarchy occupied a uniquely prestigious role at the top of the official hierarchy, it could come to seem less sacrosanct to Protestants who had already grown used to undermining other forms of authority. Robert Crowley addressed members of parliament as 'most Christian councillors' because reform depended upon them and also probably because his respect for order could blind him to some of their misdemeanours, but in a more perceptive moment he lamented the existence of an assembly 'so void of God's Holy Spirit'.³⁹ Condemnations that were even more damning of public authorities from the king's council downwards were not uncommon in Protestant literature. John Bale's pronouncements about public officers were characteristically vivid and unambiguous: 'A king's high counsellor

39. Crowley, op. cit., p.173

... yea a lord chancellor of a most noble realm is now become a vile slave for antichrist.... Oh Wriothesley and Rich, two false Christians and blasphemous apostates from God! More fit are ye for swine-keeping than to be of a prince's council or yet to govern a Christian commonwealth.'⁴⁰

Thus in certain respects godly rule and constitutional realities were utterly at variance and several writers were significantly advancing towards the position that these realities were legally inconsequential unless they met the standards of godly rule. John Hooper distinguished between the designation of the nobility and their social activity: 'In time past men were accounted noble for virtue and justice They were born no gentlemen, but made gentlemen for their noble and virtuous acts. The nobility nowadays ... thinketh it enough to have the name...'⁴¹ But Hooper did not proceed to the conclusion that the current 'degenerate' nobility, lacking in noble acts, should therefore be deprived of the name of nobility - the symbol by which society denoted its recognition of them. Likewise Thomas Becon applauded nobility who were 'gentlemen both in name and deed', but certain unelaborated statements implied a more radical reasoning. Becon referred to 'greedy gripes and hungry horse-leeches' who 'usurped' the name of gentlemen and in fact were not gentlemen at all but more tyrants and murderers.⁴² The concept of usurpation, the employment of power without the concomitant divine authority,

40. Bale, Works, op. cit., p.212

41. Hooper, op. cit., p.363

42. Becon, Catechism etc., op. cit., p.600

was to be one of the most important ideological weapons employed by Knox and others against Mary Tudor. Becon, however did not expand on this theme and the fact that he was writing at a time when a turbulent populace threatened royal authority was no encouragement to him to do so. Nor did this reticence necessarily denote an overly conservative mentality. The English reformer did not need to possess an Englishman's fear of disorder to know that to expose every papist and hypocrite as a usurper in his office might jeopardize with anarchy the extremely fragile gains already made by Protestantism. In the next reign there was considerably less to lose by exposing the falseness of a regime that could offer only harm to the nation.

Nevertheless it was a measure of the idealism of English Protestantism in this period that the validity not just of the social but of the specifically political status of the nobility was sometimes questioned in completely unambiguous terms. To Thomas Lever it was quite insufficient for the nobility to brandish their royal letters of commission as an automatic self-justification. The various 'sheep-skins' of legal recognition had to be progressively stripped off to reveal the unsavoury and ungodly animal that lurked beneath. 'For he that hath the properties,' Lever wrote, 'and useth the trades of a false thief and a cruel murderer can never be a faithful officer in deed, although he be so named by his own flattery, in the Patron's presentation, in the Bishop's induction, yea and in the King's Patent, sealed with the broad seal. I had need to take heed how that I speak openly against anything

in any man's Patent, sealed with the King's great seal. Much more need had you to take heed how that ye do anything expressedly against God's will and testament sealed with Christ's precious blood. It is expressly against God's testament to clothe a wolf in a lamb's skin, to call a thief an officer, and a cruel murderer a charitable pastor, to call evil by the name of good and good by the name of evil.' Lever's argument was made even more interesting by the fact that he displayed at one point an attitude to authority less drastic in its implications and which paralleled the first reaction of some of the exiles to Mary Tudor. Evil officers were a tyranny sanctioned by God. 'It is God,' he wrote, 'which maketh a hypocrite to be a ruler for the sins of the people.' But Lever, like the Marian exiles after him, was obviously prepared to move with an easy volatility between this kind of resignation to the status quo and expressions of angry and godly discontentment. Protestants in both periods tended at times to console their frustrations, but at other times to reach a point of anger at which they refused to make God responsible for practices of satanic origin. 'If thou,' Lever wrote, 'by money or friendship have bought either benefice or office, thou canst not be of Christ's institution, but of the Devil's intrusion, not a faithful disposer, but a thievish extortioner of God's gifts.'⁴³

But it was not merely the correction of political officers but a sanctification of the whole politico-legal system that some Protestants demanded in the period before

43. Lever, op. cit., pp.84-5, 34, 110

1553. A man like William Punt was bound to compare the Marian régime unfavourably with Edward's order with its sanctified court of session complete with a prophet-crier and apostolic witnesses. Henry Brinkelow, on the other hand, had he lived, would have entered exile with an even greater independence - an independence fostered by a legacy of protest. Brinkelow's statements were not celebrations of the purity of the court system but lamentations of its corruption. 'And let all things,' he wrote, 'be finished in that court where they be begun, unless men appeal in cause of life and death or for great and weighty matters, which may be brought to one head court of the realm, and to have no removing but to that one court, as it was in Moses' time. Break down some of your courts, for ye have so many, being so filthily ministered.' Brinkelow repeatedly demanded the reform of English legal practice in accordance with biblical models. The judicial accessibility of the king, recounted in Deuteronomy, should replace the remoteness inherent in a complicated and sophisticated system. 'And why sat they in the gates,' Brinkelow asked, 'but that the people, yea, even the poorest, might come and open unto the king his own cause?! ... For the reverence of God, ye kings and rulers, either sit in the open gates again, or else let your gates, yea even all your doors, even to your privy chamber be wide open...'⁴⁴

Most devastating of all were Brinkelow's attacks upon the laws of England and the assumptions upon which they rested. It was not the ultimacy of his native law, but its very

44. Brinkelow, op. cit., pp.26, 42 (my italics)

contingency that Brinkelow found most striking: 'when God shall say at the day of judgement "why hast thou taken away my minister's livings from them the first year that they fed my flock?" think ye that God will allow this excuse "I did it by the grant of the/parliament" when as that act of parliament is clean contrary to God's word?',⁴⁵ Even Thomas Lever, who was accustomed to speak of the laws of the realm in the same breath as the laws of God, was forced by candour into an admission that a discrepancy between the two could sometimes exist. 'He that doth no work,' Lever wrote, 'should take no wages; he that doth no duties should take no fees. Alas, this is God's word, written in his will and testament, sealed with Christ's blood, and yet the customs and laws of England be clean contrary.'⁴⁶ Brinkelow, unlike his fellow Henrician exile Turner, made little attempt to excuse the law, to explain it away as something other than the law. On the contrary, he was prepared to make devastating assertions of parliamentary fallibility. 'This,' he wrote, 'is the thirteenth article of our creed added of late - that whatsoever the parliament doth must needs be well done and the parliament or any proclamation out of the parliament house cannot err...'⁴⁷ In view of this it should perhaps be asked if Brinkelow represented a different strand in English Protestantism to Turner's - a strand not so dedicated to the institutions of political order in England. But though Turner was prepared to stretch his claims to constitutional decency to a virtual

45. Ibid, p.40

46. Lever, op. cit., p.84

47. Brinkelow, op. cit., p.35

breaking point, if this breaking point had been reached it would hardly have been Turner's religious idealism that would have collapsed. This, as we have seen and will see, remained impeccable throughout Edward's reign and the Marian turmoil. Brinkelow, who was equally anxious to prove his loyalty to Henry the eighth if not to a Protestant constitution, simply displayed a lesser capacity for self-delusion or a less sophisticated tactical sense than Turner. Recognizing that his desire to be a good subject could not be entirely reconciled with his Protestantism, he exposed the contradiction with a characteristically Protestant candour.

When John Knox joined these English Protestants in 1549 he brought with him a Scottish irreverence for political authority, an experience of somewhat uneasy participation in opposition to his native rulers. In one of its two aspects the English political experience could hardly have been more different; in the other it was very similar. English Protestants, with their longstanding dedication to the various processes of political order in England, were to enter exile in 1553 with their constitutional virginity virtually unimpaired. But during Edward's reign the urge to sanctity, the enthusiasm for godly rule began to transcend the constitutional instinct of English Protestants. Indeed not merely the sanctity but even the corruption of certain English political institutions became apparent. But despite this it was only with Mary's accession that English Protestants were brought fully face to face with their political ambivalence. Their reactions were therefore

likely to be rather more hesitat and equivocal than Knox's, but there was obviously a strong possibility that their political idealism would prove triumphant over their political citizenship.

If Protestants did proceed to a denunciation of ungodly rule in Mary's reign it was likely that this would inspire them to some form of political action. But at this stage we need mainly be concerned with the nature of political action in the earlier period - an action which Protestants demanded against papists, traitors and worldlings. In this respect this chapter has established that Protestants would tend to look, though probably with increasing impatience, for the resolution of their social enmities by means of the normal political channels - channels which still partly satisfied the godly instincts of Protestants. But Edwardian political action (like the political perspectives we have been examining in this chapter) was of more than incidental and localized interest. Though the political instruments were obviously different the drastic and violent political solutions of this period were a significant prototype of later Marian solutions.

Chapter 6 England's Constitutional Crusade

English radicals believed that if England was not instantly purged of its sin the whole nation would be turned by God into a virtual wasteland. Scottish Protestants of the same period possessed a similar sense of urgency and anger, but they were forced to work for their objectives outside and indeed against the authorized political channels. Their English counterparts by contrast were obviously hopeful that the full force of England's king and laws would be brought to bear on their social adversaries. But, as in Scotland, the exact form that this action would take depended not merely on the Protestant instinct that it would have to be drastic in character but also on the types of action which were natural to the particular medium which had been chosen. The factional interests to which Scottish Protestantism attached itself had always been politically active through displays of force, skirmishes and, occasionally, wholesale slaughter. But as Protestant politics began to conform itself to factional politics in Scotland the enthusiastic participation of Protestants was facilitated by confidence in Old Testament guarantees that carnage and violence were respectable if they were performed in God's service. And it was also a combination of biblical and secular reassurances that finally persuaded English Protestants that their enemies might be disposed of by violent means.

English Protestants found their secular sanction for violence not in the centrifugal power of particularist magnates but in the centripetal power of the monarchy. England's compact and powerful state was dedicated to the employment of concentrated and ruthless violence against its external and internal enemies. England's military exploits and adventures were seldom more enthusiastically celebrated than in Thomas Becon's 'Policy of War'. But citing a whole sequence of Hebrew examples, Becon also attempted to prove England's additional need for a moral army trusting only in God as a source of victory - a trust vindicated utterly and for ever in the mighty victory of Gideon's small depleted band. Yet for all his insistence that divine aid was indispensable England's prophet displayed a far greater respect for profane assistance than Gideon had. 'Are the armours of war to be neglected?' he asked. 'Are the policies for obtaining victory to be despised? Is no provision to be made for the conservation of the Christian public weal ...? God forbid! We may not attempt God by any means.' This discrepancy between Becon and Gideon was hardly surprising, for England's military strength could only breed a thoroughly secular worship of human force. Becon rejoiced in England's weapons, fortresses and military power - assets with which England apparently was more opulently enriched than any other nation. And in the process the politics of Gideon - God's politics - tended to be pushed aside in an orgy of English self-reliance.¹

1. Becon, Early Works, op. cit., pp.245-7

It was hardly surprising therefore that English Protestants sometimes invoked political action in secular terms, calling for the defence of England or the commonwealth against its enemies. Moreover, as we have already seen, Protestants sometimes authenticated their verbal attacks upon papists, traitors and worldlings by secular standards and it was perfectly logical therefore that they should have conceived action against them as secular action. Most suggestive in this respect were Protestant descriptions of unproductive members of the commonwealth as diseased organs of a natural body.² George Joye's treatment for the 'cancer' of adultery clearly lacked many of the refinements of modern therapy. He believed that kings and rulers should 'like expert and godly wise surgeons cut off from the body of the city or commonwealth such corrupt and contagious members as are adulterers...'³ Joye pointed out that this was Christ's own advice, but the roots of organic imagery in English culture were as much classical and indigenous as they were biblical. Other writers like Robert Crowley simply referred to 'rotten members' of the body (in this case rebels) and demanded that they be amputated from the English commonwealth. Some writers attempted to invest political action of this kind with a new dignity by placing it within the context of classical culture. John Ponet in one of his rare pre-Marian references to classical authors suggested that Edward the sixth in his 'noble acts' for the destruction of

2. See above Section B, Chapter 2, note 8

3. Joye, *A contrary etc.*, op. cit., C4

idolatry and wickedness' would surpass the victories and triumphs of Parius, Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Scipio Africanus and Julius Caesar.⁴

But the description of political solutions in these comparatively secular terms still remained fairly sporadic amongst radical Protestants in Edward's reign. Indeed this was true also of the problems for which Protestants wanted these solutions adopted. The usual and simple accusation against papists and worldlings was that they were opponents of God's law. Men were urged more often to become Protestants than to become Protestant Englishmen, more frequently to be saints than to be citizens. The problem of rebellion, which did provoke outbursts of predominantly secular rhetoric in Edward's reign, was the least of the Protestant's three major areas of concern in this period.⁵ In the meantime therefore Protestant secularism remained little more than a potential weapon, but in Mary's reign when Englishness and chauvinism were to become conditions of Protestant success its full implications for Protestantism were to be revealed.

Power was therefore a secular reality to English Protestants, but its exercise was most often justified not in a secular idiom but in the sanctified idiom of the Bible. It hardly needed great ingenuity on the part of English Protestants in view of the great stresses to which they were subject to discover that the Bible could be employed as a kind of military textbook, but the comment-

4. Ponet, Preface to translation to 'A tragedy ... by Bernardino Ochino', op. cit., A2

5. See above Section B, Chapter 2

aries of continental reformers certainly helped them towards this realization. The warfaring spirit of English Puritanism is usually characterized as a 'Calvinist' spirit, but it is probable that for Edwardian Protestants at least (and even for the Marian exiles as we shall see) Bullinger provided a greater stimulus to political violence than Calvin. Bullinger's Decades were prominently distributed in England and one writer significantly chose to make for Edward a special translation of the ninth sermon of the second Decade - a sermon justifying the assaults of princes upon their foreign enemies and upon rebels against their own rule. In this handbook of warfare Bullinger recounted with approval the bloody deeds of Old Testament heroes like Moses, Joshua and the Judges. 'For what thing can man reprove in war?' he asked. 'To put blame in this is not a sign of religious men but of timorous persons.... Against the violence of our adversaries good men may rightfully war.'⁶

To some extent, however, English Protestants moderated their inclinations towards violence by exercises in brinkmanship. John Hooper compared England's sinners with the prophet Jonah, who had disobeyed God's command to preach to the city of Nineveh. Edward's punitive action against the sinners in the 'ship' of his commonwealth would be as catastrophic as God's punitive action apparently was against Jonah. 'Is it possible to sail or live quietly with so many obstinate Jonahs?' Hooper asked. 'Nay doubtless.

6. Heinrich Bullinger, A treatise or sermon of Henry Bullinger much fruitful and necessary for this time, trans. J.P., A2-3, A8, B5, C7

What remedy then? Let them all be cast into the sea.' The terrible penalty, however, turned out to be only a shock tactic - the prelude to an entry into the sublime. The jaws of the whale were not the jaws of death, but a catharsis for the sinner. Frightened into repentance, he would experience the 'wonderful pity and mercy of God' and be lifted to the ecstasies of salvation. It was the belief of course of radical Protestants that only small areas of purity existed in an otherwise polluted society and of the solutions to this problem Hooper's dream was obviously the most comforting one. But it was still a dream with nightmarish elements. Bishops, clergy, noblemen and lawyers might merely be cast into the waters of deprivation and displacement, but traitors, thieves and murderers would apparently only experience repentance on the gallows. And in the course of exhorting Edward to preoccupy himself chiefly with the punishment of adultery and blasphemy Hooper emphasized the fact that the tribe of Benjamin had been massacred for their defence of adultery.⁷ Hooper's comparative caution was echoed on more than one occasion by John Veron. It was Veron's desire that the ungodly should if possible be 'allured and won by charitable means' and that they should be murdered only with the 'sword of the spirit' - the breath of God's lips.⁸ He also recognized the need for more drastic measures than these, but his strategy amounted to an attempt to civilize and moderate the Old Testament demand for carnage. 'The godly

7. Hooper, op. cit., pp.480, 490, 495-6, 475-6

8. John Veron, Preface to translation of 'The Image of both Pastors by Ulrich Zwingli', 1550, A6

kings of the Old Testament,' he wrote, 'when they did put down idolatry and superstition, did slay and kill all the fornicators of the idols and false gods, weeding out the false prophets from among the people. ... Howbeit I would not have them put to death or slain, unless they be overstubborn or obstinate, or go about some tumult or novation of things....'⁹

However, despite all their qualifications it was certainly no less than a calculated policy of slaughter that these English prophets demanded. This, they believed, was the only alternative to an even greater slaughter. 'It was not for naught,' wrote Veron, 'that those godly kings which in times past did put down all idolatry and superstition ... did slay and kill up all Baal's priests and false prophets of groves and hill altars.... Nor let any man think that it was cruelly done, no more than when a rotten member is cut off from the body, lest that it should infect all the whole. Is it not (I pray you) much more expedient that 850 false prophets should be killed up by some Elijah than that all the whole Israel should perish.'¹⁰ The citation of Old Testament prototypes for violence was recurrent in this literature. Some writers compared Edward the sixth to Hezekiah in breaking down the brazen serpent, but of greater significance was the anxiousness to demand assaults upon idolators as well as upon idolatry. William Turner invested his ordinary English fox hunt with a Hebrew conclusion. Once his Romish victim had

9. Veron, A most necessary and fruitful dialogue, etc., op. cit., C2

10. Veron, Preface to 'The Image etc.' op. cit., A6

been trapped in his hole behind the high altar, Turner would issue the following invitation to the royal hunter to make the final kill: 'After that I have found this ravenous and mankilling fox I trust (most victorious prince) that ye will follow King Solomon in punishing of him.

King Solomon took Joab, a murderer, the captain of his father's wars from the altar and put him to death and suffered not the sanctuary to save him.'¹¹ Edwardian Protest-

ants repeatedly cast their rulers in heroic and inherently violent roles: Northumberland was the 'terror and thunderbolt of the papists' and Edward himself would grow up to be a 'terror to all the sovereigns of the earth'.¹² Nor were

these statements a merely rhetorical indulgence in vague fantasies of violence. Henry Brinkelow knew what his demand for a royal destruction of the false prophets of England implied: it meant ominously that not one 'pompous bishop' would remain in the realm.¹³ Thomas Lever was

even more specific. He had been bolder than most in describing the royal commissioning of certain public officers as no more than a cloak - a 'sheep-skin' of unjustified legal recognition for men who were in fact wolves. In his prescription of a remedy for this situation to the king and council he followed out the logic of this argument:

'If you do not rather pull the sheep skins over the wolves' ears and hang their carcasses upon the pales than suffer them to continue still, God will pluck you down with some sudden mischief rather than maintain and suffer you in so high

11. Turner, *The hunting, etc.*, op. cit., A4-5

12. *Original Letters*, op. cit., Vol.2, p.439; Vol.1, p.82

13. Brinkelow, op. cit., p.58

authority to use such uncharitable, ungodly and cruel pity.' There were few orations made at Paul's Cross more powerful or terrifying than the following description by Lever of the slaughter over which Edward - the Moses of a new Israel - was to preside. 'O what a bloody day it shall be,' Lever exclaimed, 'when as for this abomination, this spiritual fornication, God shall command his faithful servant Moses, the king's majesty, to take and hang up all the rulers of the people that have wittingly suffered these whorish Midianites, these popish abuses.'¹⁴ And Robert Crowley had an equally terrifying warning for the clergy - of a king who had sent a separate piece of a pluralist to each of his many benefices.¹⁵

But if the chief architect of this political violence was to be Edward the sixth, what role remained for ordinary Protestants? For Edward could be expected to implement his godly crusade through the normal political channels - parliament, the law and the courts. But it was significant that Protestants in this period repeatedly described their own endeavour as military in character and themselves as embattled and battling individuals. Philip Nicholls' assertion - 'God's word is never fired abroad without contention, strife and much trouble' - and his citation of Christ's words - 'Think not you that I am come to send peace but a sword' - could easily have served as credos for the new generation of Protestants.¹⁶ Nicholls scorned words like discretion, sobriety and caution, for the only true discretion

14. Lever, op. cit., pp.86, 125

15. Crowley, op. cit., p.28

16. Nicholls, The copy of a letter etc., op cit., D7

was zeal.¹⁷ But the language of Christian soldiership was frequently something less than it seemed. Its antecedents in Protestant thought were long and it often denoted a remarkably passive attitude towards social evil. Thomas Becon's earlier works were spattered with military terminology, but his concern was not so much with the Christian's charge into battle as with his preparation for it. He regarded the life of man as 'nothing else but than a very knighthood and warfare upon the earth', but one could only graduate to full-time service in the Lord's army through the rigorous school of devotional exercise, by donning the 'celestial panoply and heavenly armature of prayer'.¹⁸ Once in this state of military preparedness the soldier had still to choose how to employ his weapons. Becon's Edwardian work 'The Solace of the Soul' began with stirring words about not playing the coward in the battle of Christ and the strife with rulers, powers and lords of the world. It soon materialized, however, that Becon's sights were set higher than on the conflict in society. He was throwing all his resources into the climax of the campaign and this climax was intensely personal rather than social. Becon had indeed supplied 'weapons' and 'armours' to put adversaries to flight, but they were paramountly for the expiring, death-bed soldier. 'Our principal conflict and chief battle,' he wrote, 'is in the time of sickness and pains of death.' The Christian soldier was therefore to take weapons to repress his Christian 'id' rather than

17. Nicholls, Here beginneth a godly new story etc., op. cit., Cl-2

18. Becon, Early Works, op. cit., pp.144-172

its social projections.¹⁹ And a soft centre of a rather similar kind emerged once the hard shell of Henry Barret's 'Arming of the Christian Warrior' was cracked. Barret presented a portrait of a sheltered soldier, his spiritual persona protected by armour from his own worse self. However, Barret's soldier was also prepared to recognize an objective evil that was more than an external stimulus to the tensions within his own spirit. He was not merely to guarantee the purity of his soul with the insulations of a collar, corselet and gauntlet ; he was also to take up his sword against Satan's cohorts in society. But the sword with which the soldier was to 'stoutly strike' the ungodly turned out to be simply the 'lance of faith'. It was symptomatic of the English Protestants' dependence on public, constitutional militancy that Barret's only sanction of overt violence in his manual of warfare was in relation to holy crusades conducted by England's king against his foreign enemies.²⁰ Similarly it was in terms of the shining life of faith, or the hand-out of the improving tract that George Joye conceived the Protestant campaign - a direct contrast to the Catholic strategy of deviousness combined with brutal repression.²¹

Nevertheless the prevalence of the motif of soldier-ship amongst these Protestants was significant. It represented the appearance of a new dynamic in Protestantism. But how much distance in fact existed in the Protestant

19. Becon, Catechism etc., op. cit., p.571

20. Henry Barret, The arming of a Christian warrior, 1549, A4-6, A8-B1, B3-4

21. Joye, a present consolation etc., op. cit., F6

consciousness between the metaphor of warfare and its actuality? Joye had stated his concept of non-violence as a fixed principle, but William Turner's reasons for the manner of his assault on the 'Poison of Pelagius' were rather different. 'Some would think,' he wrote, 'that it were the best way to use the same weapons against this manifest monster that the papists used against us - that is material fire and faggot. But we think, seeing that it is no material thing that we fight withal, but ghostly, that is a wood spirit, that it were most meet that we should fight with the sword of God's word and with spiritual fire against it, or else we are like to profit but a little in our business.' Violence was rejected not so much because it was unprincipled as because it was counter-productive. And the judge in Turner's 'Dialogue' only tempered the rigours of justice out of concern for the reputation of Protestantism. The papist defendant was in fact 'most worthy to be burnt', but lest Protestants should acquire a reputation for bloodshedding he was simply to suffer the slightly lesser fate of immediately rejoining his father the pope.²²

Turner's practical rather than principled non-violence was significant and in fact the seeds of a potentially more militant attitude were already transparently present amongst some Protestants. Protestant faith in a constitutional crusade was strained by the scepticism about the quality of many public officials. It was no simple trust that

22. Turner, A preservative or triacle against the poison of Pelagius, 1551, A4; Turner, A new dialogue, etc., op. cit., G8

Turner placed in the rulers of England. Rather he issued an invitation to them to justify a trust about which he obviously had profound reservations. 'If that Christ's enemy and the king's,' he wrote, 'might still occupy in England that occupation that maketh him Christ's enemy and the king's without forbidding and correction after that his fault is openly known, the officers of England and governors under the king were not Christ's friends and the king's, therefore I trust that they will at the least forbid you your devilish occupations.'²³ All this of course began to create a sense of political impotence, an impotence which (even after Mary's accession) it was extremely difficult to release from its constitutional stranglehold. John Bale is a classic example of the frustrated, or rather the sublimated, political activist. 'Wicked persons,' he wrote, 'are in all places to be tolerated of private men (I say not may), because there can be no Abel unless he be vexed of some malicious Cain. We ought therefore of congruence patiently to suffer, but yet not in all points to hold our peace. We are not bound altogether to bear them in their mischiefs. No Christ never did so, neither yet the prophets afore him, nor his apostles after him. But with stomach (as occasion gave it) they inveighed against them and mightily reprov'd them.'²⁴ The clear implication of this statement is that Bale compensated for the impotence which his status as a private citizen entailed by his torrents of foul-mouthed invective. On the other hand there

23. Turner, *The rescuing etc.*, op. cit., N7

24. Bale, *An expostulation etc.*, op. cit., A5

was a limit to the extent to which tensions of this kind could be diverted. Under a more corrupt regime (like Mary's), when men like Bale had finally shouted themselves hoarse, they might at last reach the decision that the time had come for different political initiatives.

Already, however, in Edward's reign there was evidence of sporadic attempts by private individuals to break through the obstructions imposed by political routine. This was facilitated by the fact that there were elements in the culture of English Protestants that encouraged political initiatives of this kind. The political aspect of the English commonwealth tradition - a tradition which emphasized the social worth of each individual - was the notion expounded by Fortescue, Starkey and others that political power was a devolution to representatives by the whole community. In emergencies this notion could be invoked to justify the deposition of unsatisfactory monarchs, but its most prevalent aspect in mid-Tudor England was the Renaissance idea that the 'articulate citizen' could be politically active as the counsellor of monarchs.²⁵

Many of the leading English radical Protestants like Turner and Ponet were highly educated humanists and these secular ideas were entirely familiar to them.²⁶ And even more pertinent to them was the biblical idea that it was the duty of prophets to act as the political advisers of kings. It was also becoming clearer, as we shall see, that God had sometimes commissioned his Hebrew prophets to more active and violent political roles.

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25. Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Articulate Citizen*, op. cit.
 26. See Winthrop S. Hudson, *John Ponet, 1516?-1556: Advocate of Limited Monarchy*, Chicago, 1942, pp.3-18; for biographical details of some of the leading radicals see W.K. Jordan, *Edward the Sixth: The Threshold of Power*, 1970, pp.275-83, 362-75

William Turner may have been inclined to confine the employment of violence to England's rulers, but his conception of England's crusade was essentially a collaborative one. The crusade was a civic effort. 'I am compelled,' he wrote, 'to do in this kind of war as cobblers, shoemakers, masons, carpenters and all other men are compelled to do when their city is besieged, that is to take weapons in their hands and become warriors, which have little or no experience of war before, every man that is a faithful citizen ought to do the best he can.'²⁷ It was significant - especially for the future - that Turner should have employed a notion - that of the citizens' militia, - which was far more obviously applicable to Renaissance Italy than to biblical history. I mentioned before how the ordinary social violations of citizenship in this period - covetousness and so on - could come in the crisis of Mary's reign to seem denials of patriotism and also of political duty. And because Protestantism was so intertwined with the values of Englishness the protection of Protestantism could be conceived of as the duty of the citizen-patriot as much as of the Protestant saint. Turner's Edwardian statement was therefore a significant anticipation of a formula which he was later to make far more prominent use of - that the citizen-patriot was responsible for the political defence of the city of God.²⁸

But, as we have already noted, Protestantism was inclined in general for the moment to conceal its secular

27. Turner, A new dialogue etc., op. cit., A2

28. See above Section B, Chapters 3 and 1, and below Part 2, Chapters 1 and 6, (5) and (6)

face. More characteristic amongst the voices that were threatening to impinge upon or even to infringe the constitutional structures were prophetic and saintly ones. Robert Crowley had no intention of allowing the impotence of his private status to impede his political vocation. 'It is far unlike,' he wrote, 'that a private person by no means worthy to be called to such an assembly should be favourably heard and accepted of them whom God hath called to be counsellors of a realm'; but despite this reservation he pronounced himself ready to suffer death in order to lay his advice before his 'natural brothers of this noble realm'. This was an appeal to equal citizenship, but Crowley proceeded to transcend this by hinging his political pretensions on his prophetic and divine political commission: 'And here I protest unto you all, that sent Jonah to the Ninevites, Daniel to the Babylonians, Nathan to king David ... witnesseth with my conscience that I run not unsent. For even the same spirit that said unto Isaiah "Cry and cease not, declare unto my people their wickedness" crieth also in my conscience....'²⁹

Crowley's 'rash enterprise' was an attempt to work within the political system, but it was also an attempt to adapt the system to a biblical model in order to meet the political needs of the private subject. George Joye, on the other hand, found, perhaps with some surprise, that the political rights of the individual in the Old Testament were sometimes in accordance with the orderly processes of English politics. 'No private person,' he wrote,

29. Crowley, op. cit., p.159

'usurpeth the office of a public magistrate in punishing this open crime with death. I heard of a man in this realm, which taking the man with his wife slew him, whom the law could not punish for so doing. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest smote the Israelite and the Midianite woman both through with his spear as they lay. And God allowed it for a just deed that pacified his wrath, so heinously hatest God the sin.'³⁰

Crowley and Joye were anxious to prove that Hebrew procedures could be adapted to English institutions or could complement current English practice. John Champneys, on the other hand, was simply content to demonstrate the bloody effectiveness of prophetic politics. Champneys was clearly impatient of the impotence of normal reformist channels. Complaining of the 'marked men' - the priests - he wrote: 'we see plainly that the higher powers have sought as much the reformation of them as may be, and yet they be as crafty as ever they were.' Champneys had a ready-made solution to hand: 'May the Lord Protector and his honourable council grant the same liberty as was granted to Elijah in the time of Ahab that there may be a trial, as between Elijah and Baal's prophets, between one such of the elect of Christ and the whole multitude of our marked ministers'. But who was to play the mighty part of Elijah at this trial? Apparently none other than Champneys himself, for his suggestion that a 'a poor layman' of 'small literature' be nominated conformed remarkably to his own description of himself as an 'unlearned layman'. Crowley's pretension to transfer the prophet from

30. Joye, *A Contrary etc.*, op. cit., A4-5

the public gallery to the floor of the House had been an attempt to reform and thereby sanctify the existing political structures, but Champney's prophet, though a public nominee, would exercise his judicial function in accordance with Hebrew rather than English decision-making procedures. Nor apparently would the king reassume his authority when the prophet-prosecutor had finished his job, for Elijah himself would pronounce God's bloody sentence on the false priests: 'God will avenge himself on you and show no mercy to you ... wherefore we ought to have no more in number of you to remain as ministers of the gospel, but even so many as Elijah suffered of Baal's priests to live when he had confounded them.....'³¹

One apparently vital factor has been omitted from this analysis. Champneys was an Anabaptist who was forced to recant certain heresies at Paul's Cross in 1549.³² But despite this Champneys obviously possessed a deference for the political order similar to that of more mainstream Protestants: his commission was to be a public one from an 'honourable council'. He probably differed politically from other Protestants simply insofar as his lack of public office allowed him a greater sense of political independence. Anthony Gilby's political imagination followed exactly the same formula as Champney's except that Gilby simply proposed the destruction of idolatry rather than idolators by the prophet. 'If I might obtain so much favour of my prince and people,' he wrote, 'as did Jerubbaal among the Israel-

31. Champneys, op. cit., F2, D8, F4, A4, G2

32. See Millar MacLure, *The Paul's Cross Sermons, 1534-1642*, London, 1958, p.48 for details of Champneys' beliefs.

ites, I could both destroy this your idol and his groves of ceremonies wherein you hid him and bid Baal avenge himself.³³ This was even nearer than Knox had come in 1548 to uniting the instrument with the plague, for on that occasion, in statement at least, the prophet's warfare had been a merely verbal one. But it should be remembered that English Protestants unlike Knox retained the ultimate reassurance that their prophetic role would be enacted against the backcloth of royal nomination. Knox had to look for his fundamental justification outside the respectability of political actuality. In any case fantasies of this kind - of the prophet as a free-ranging political warrior - remained fairly atypical amongst English Protestants. But they were an indication of the impatience and also of the political ingenuity of Protestants. Under Edward the sixth's godly regime Protestants retained their faith in a constitutional crusade and this faith was so deeply-rooted that it would hardly be easy to shatter it even under a corrupt and perverted regime. But clearly frustration was growing at the inertia of some elements of the Edwardian system and new political initiatives were being conceived. It was this idealism that was to make a politics of resistance and regicide possible during the exile. At the same time the traditionalist element in the English political mentality, the attachment to legal and constitutional processes, guaranteed that English responses would be slower and rather less radical than Knox's.

33. Gilby, op. cit., 68

Chapter 7 England's Scotsman

For four years John Knox found a second home in England. But it was a home that failed to domesticate his passions. For he took his place amongst reformers in many ways as wary and as zealous as himself. They were socially alienated, socially idealistic and politically motivated. To some extent their political sense was a constricted one - they tended to think automatically in terms of a constitutional crusade - but the essential conditions already existed for a further politicization of their outlook. Dedicated to godly rule, they were to be confronted after 1553 with ungodly rule: they had to make themselves architects rather than assistants of the crusade. Exile was to be less of a political cleavage for Knox: already before his arrival in England Scotland had begun to propel him into the politics of the exile. And his political responses in exile were to be similar, but significantly different from English responses. Knox's experience in English churchmanship, his Scottish response to English problems, sheds further light on this difference.

During his period in England Knox tended to share in the general sense of social dissatisfaction experienced by English reformers. It was inevitable that he would view the standards of social and economic behaviour in England with concern and anger, for he brought with him the same social philosophy as the English reformers possessed.

The 'Confession of Faith' of Henry Balnaves of Halhill, which Knox summarized whilst he was confined to the French galleys, advanced the ideal of a static and harmonious society in which master and servant, subject and prince faithfully fulfilled essentially unchanging obligations. Balnaves' society possessed the coherence of a natural body: its members were as united as hands, feet, ears and eyes. (1) This was the same mediaeval vision which sustained English reformers in their verbal assault on the covetousness of thrusting entrepreneurs. And in retrospect Knox echoed their judgement about English society. Edwardian England had been worthy of Jeremiah's prophetic condemnations of Judah - 'From the least unto the most they are all bent upon avarice, and they gape for lucre; from the priest to the prophet every man dealeth deceitfully'. Craft, deceit, violence and oppression, Knox claimed, had been universal in English society.²

To some extent, though, Knox must have remained relatively insulated from some of the major areas of English Protestant interest - indeed from some of the richness of its concern. His ministry in the remote north of England at Berwick and Newcastle occupied him until within a year of Edward's death. And this area with its deeply ingrained Catholicism probably reinforced the rather narrow religious obsessions which he had inherited from the Scottish situation. England, he claimed, was currently in the grip of a

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1. Henry Balnaves, 'The Confession of Faith' in Knox, Works, op. cit., Vol.3, pp.535-42, 525. For Knox's summary see pp.27-8
 2. Knox, Works, op. cit., Vol.3, pp.173, 175

dangerous and indeed conspiratorial popery. The downfall of the Protector Somerset had been no less than an attempt by the 'Devil and his members', by 'pestilent papists' to produce dissension within the political leadership and the subversion of true religion. And the primary objective of England's covert papists was no less than the death of the king himself.³

Though some of the peculiar stresses of English Protestants probably eluded Knox during his period in England, his attitude towards the social environment was similarly wary and hostile. And like English reformers he came to the conclusion that present troubles were rapidly propelling England towards disaster. The subject of calamity recurred again and again in a letter to his congregation at Berwick in 1552. 'Certain signs there be,' he wrote, '(as contempt of God's truth, iniquity raging without punishment, the away taking of godly magistrates, the multitude of wicked men placed in authority) which teacheth God's elect both of the troubles which themselves shall sustain, as also of those horrible plagues and destructions of the ungodly.' Jeremiah in similar circumstances had warned the realm of Judah of a universal plague - a plague which in Knox's contention was unavoidable, for God's punishment of offences was immutable throughout history.⁴

But Knox's treatment of England's future time of troubles was significantly different from that of English

3. Ibid, pp.277-8, 297

4. Knox, Letter to the congregation at Berwick, in Peter Lerimer, John Knox and the Church of England, London, 1875, pp.255, 256, 253

Protestants. Whilst English Protestants tended to speak of a simple and total calamity, Knox was more discriminating, more concerned about the separate fates of the godly and the ungodly. The godly would suffer in the general punishment, but they would also enjoy a special protection. In Jeremiah's time the prophet (Knox?) had first been cast into prison, but afterwards delivered by God. And certain members of all estates, but mostly the poor (the Berwick congregation?) had been able to remain in the land, untroubled and unmolested. 'Mark and consider, beloved brethren,' Knox wrote, 'that the godly shall rejoice and find favours of God when justice shall be executed upon proud contemners.'⁵ It was a promise that made no obvious political demands of Protestants: the godly and their future were subject to God's politics, God's protection. By contrast English expectations, as we have seen, seemed to issue a political imperative; and they resulted in demands for a royally-sponsored crusade, a rescue operation to avert God's plague. Knox, as we shall see, did in fact possess a lesser sense of political possibility than this - a somewhat surprising fact. For it might have been expected that his Scottish experience would have stimulated him not merely to emulate English demands, but to launch himself enthusiastically into the kind of personal, prophetic campaign that some English Protestants were slowly groping their way towards. The reason was certainly not a lack of concern. We have seen that Knox shared the social anxieties of English Protestants and earnestly hoped for the

5. Ibid, p.257

destruction of England's ungodly. The reason lies in the greater clarity of Knox's political vision - a clarity that reduced him to a sense of political impotence.

A whole area of the English Protestant's political experience was missing in Knox - the area of reverence for English law, of secular faith in kings, of constitutional myth. His contribution to Protestant politics was therefore lacking in English ambivalence: it sprang from a perspective of unimpeded godliness. It was a perspective which Knox was able to sustain by the nature of his status within the Edwardian Church. Whilst contemporaries like Ponet and Hooper accepted the highest ecclesiastical office and took pride in their public service, Knox retained the simple status of preacher and refused to assume the bishopric of Rochester. In this way he was able to avoid institutionalization by English Protestantism and to operate instead in a purified enclave at the periphery of the establishment. The Berwick congregation seems to have maintained a form of worship that violated several of the provisions of the First Edwardian Prayer Book.⁶ In view of its smallness and remoteness this could be done unobtrusively. Hooper in his diocese, on the other hand, was forced into a head-on clash with the establishment over similar issues - a lesson Knox must have been aware of. As we have seen, several English Protestants were beginning to stand in prophetic judgement over aspects of the political

6. Lorimer, op. cit., pp.29-32, 290-2

order, but Knox's reactions were less ambivalent, more incisive. In advising the Berwick congregation to adopt the requirement of the Second Prayer Book that communion be received in a kneeling posture he appealed to the notion of 'common order', but with a clearer sense of its ordinary utility and contingency than English Protestants usually seemed to possess. The advantages of common order lay in the maintenance of unity and peace in the Church, in avoidance of the dangers of dissension. Insofar as the kneeling requirement did not violate the principle articles of faith it could therefore be satisfied. But this would still be done, Knox wrote, 'with dolour of your hearts, daily calling unto God for reformation of the same'.⁷ It was therefore only natural that it should have been Knox who was later instrumental in renewing debate about English cultic practice amongst English Protestants during the exile. He regarded the Edwardian Church as emergent rather than static, its legal pronouncements not automatically as finalities but as parts of a creative process of godliness. He must have known that a total commitment to the Edwardian Church would have compromised this godliness. And it would have compromised it not merely liturgically, but in the totality of religious mission. For though Knox was distressed by England's cultic imperfections, his greatest anger, indeed despair, resulted from the decadence of its political leadership. Awareness of this decadence of course was by no means confined to Knox. In a remarkable tribute Nicholas Ridley linked Knox's name with some of the foremost English preachers.

7. Knox, Letter to the congregation at Berwick, op.cit., pp.261-3

'As for Latimer, Lever, Bradford and Knox,' he wrote, 'their tongues were so sharp, they ripped in so deep in their galled backs, to have purged them no doubt of that filthy matter that was festered in their hearts, of insatiable covetousness, of filthy carnality and voluptuousness, of intolerable ambition and pride, of ungodly loathsomeness to hear poor men's causes, and to hear God's word, that these men of all other these magistrates then could never abide.'⁸ It seems, however, that Knox's attacks possessed an exceptional candour - a candour that extended to the public and personal denunciation of some of England's leading politicians. For instance, in the Lenten Sermons of 1552 Sir William Paulet found himself thinly disguised as the biblical villain Shebna: 'What wonder is it ... that a young and innocent king be deceived by crafty, covetous, wicked and ungodly counsellors? I am greatly afraid that Ahithophel be counsellor, that Judas bear the purse and that Shebna be scribe, controller and treasurer.'⁹ Of course by this time disgust at the corruption of Northumberland's regime was rampant, but as early as 1549 in his denunciation of the overthrow of Somerset Knox had displayed a quite unusual plain-spokenness about politics.¹⁰ In the early period of Mary's reign he was alone amongst the exiles in identifying political corruption as one of the major causes of England's downfall.¹¹ And he seems to have spoken with an incredible frankness even to Northumberland,

8. Nicholas Ridley, *The Works of Nicholas Ridley*, Ed. H. Christmas, Parker Society, Cambridge, 1842, p.59

9. Knox, *Works*, op. cit., Vol.3, p.282

10. *Ibid*, pp.277-8

11. *Ibid*, pp.174-8

who treated him in return with a kind of guilty awe.¹²

But though Knox may have lacked many of the constitutional fears and scruples of English Protestants, his political attitudes were equally, though differently, ambivalent: it was an ambivalence arising out of his godliness. For England after all operated under a more than nominally Protestant regime and considerable areas of religious zeal existed in English political life. Knox's tributes to Edward the sixth were as effluent and as utterly sincere as those of English reformers. And in retrospect he acknowledged the 'boldness and knowledge' of parliament in legislating against the 'round-clipped god' and indeed against most of the superstitions that had previously profaned true religion.¹³ His advice to the Berwick congregation not to resist the institution of kneeling in the Lord's Supper was partly influenced no doubt by a certainty that resistance would be counter-productive. But it was also informed by the feeling that concession to an establishment which formally upheld all the principal truths of religion was correct and proper.¹⁴

Confrontation with a regime at once godly and ungodly effectively neutralized Knox's political energy and imagination. English Protestants with a strong secular and religious attachment to royal action turned somewhat despairingly to the idea of a constitutional crusade - a crusade which might even be directed against political

12. See W.K. Jordan, *Edward the sixth: The Threshold of Power*, 1970, p.374

13. Knox, *Works*, op. cit., Vol.3, pp.266, 280, 279

14. Knox, *Letter to the congregation at Berwick*, op. cit., pp. 261-3

officers. This was a course of action less obvious, less automatic in Knox's case. And in any case he possessed a clearer realization than English reformers of England's political sin. For Knox the royal crusade would have had to have been more a royal purge - a purge beginning with Northumberland. And if the idea ever occurred to him he must have been conscious of its lack of political realism; Northumberland was England's effective ruler. Because of this a lesser crusade was equally impracticable: its improbable architects would have had to have been the very politicians who had escaped the purge. Knox's political activity thus became sporadic and largely defensive - an attempt to protect the religious position he had already established for himself in England. It was in defence of the religious practice of himself and of his Berwick congregation that he took action against the new prescription of kneeling in the Second Edwardian Prayer Book - a practice which the earlier Book rather naively had taken for granted. It was to keep his distance from a corrupt and almost certainly doomed regime that he refused the bishopric of Rochester and then the charge of All Hallows, Bread Street - a decision he had to defend before the Privy Council. These actions were performed with Knox's customary energy and boldness. Though he only secured a compromise on the issue of kneeling - the insertion of the 'Black Rubric', which asserted that kneeling did not imply adoration of the sacrament - and also enjoyed the backing of powerful political forces, to take the lead in such a venture and then obtain a concession was a remarkable achievement for

a virtually unknown emigré Scot. Equally remarkable was his subsequent success in securing a modification of the statement in the Forty-Two Articles that everything in the Prayer Book conformed to Scripture. And it must have taken considerable courage to resist the blandishments of Northumberland in his offers of promotion.¹⁵ But despite Knox's energy and courage, despite the fact that some of his efforts helped to set English Protestantism on a more radical course, his major preoccupation at this time was more the protection and vindication of his own purity than a crusade against the enemies of religion. Less seduced than Englishmen by constitutional expectations, more conscious of the barriers to reform within the English establishment, Knox experienced a greater sense of political impotence in England than England's own reformers. His most constructive and on-going political activity in England was his thunderous verbal assault on politicians - a venture which only served to increase the polarization between the two sides.¹⁶ He therefore tended to centre his attention less on a prevention of the impending calamity than on the fate of the godly during and after its occurrence. Up to a point he was already anticipating and living with the situation of exile. No 'art or policy of man', no royal initiative could avert the catastrophe. And with the failure of ordinary human political agencies the godly became dependent on God's politics: it was God who would find a means to secure the release of the prophet.¹⁷ Of course new and more

15. Jasper Ridley, *John Knox*, Oxford, 1968, pp.106-21

16. Knox, *Works*, op. cit., Vol.3, p.177.

17. Knox, *Letter to the congregation at Berwick*, op. cit., pp. 255, 257

unorthodox human agents - even rebels - might appear. In such a situation Knox's political energies were more likely to find release than those of English Protestants. For the clarity of political vision that had reduced him to political impotence in one situation might easily inspire him to political activism in another. The English political consciousness would have to fight to loose itself from its constitutional shell; Knox would be more quickly alive to the godly possibility of overthrowing an ungodly regime.

PART TWOVOICES FROM THE WILDERNESSChapter 1England: The Religious Crisis

The accession of Mary in 1553 meant the end of England's radical Protestant experiment. It also meant a systematic re-enactment of Catholic legislation, a restoration of England's bonds with the Holy See, and a brutal persecution and harassment of Protestants. Within a year most of the leading Edwardian radical Protestants had found their way to Protestant havens in Europe. Thomas Lever went to Frankfurt, William Turner wandered, John Ponet settled in Strasburg, and Christopher Goodman and Antony Gilby eventually arrived in Geneva. Important colonies were established at Zurich, Strasburg, Geneva, Emden, Basle, Wesel and Aarau.¹ During the five years of exile each one of these colonies contributed vitally to a still extant yet virtually neglected literature - a literature which is our only record of one highly significant aspect of the Tudor Protestant mentality. Mentality or mentalities? For I mentioned before the thesis that Genevan ideology assumed a revolutionary form which was quite foreign to the exiles in other centres.² This distinction should be kept in mind. It may contain one of the keys to Marian thought, though perhaps not the

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1. See Christina Garrett, *The Marian Exiles: a Study in the Origins of Elizabethan Puritanism*, Cambridge, 1938, for details of these colonies and biographies of the exiles.
 2. Michael Walzer, *op.cit.*, pp.92-113.

particular key which its author imagined. I shall try to show that the underlying political cohesion of the exiles was more important than their divisions.

The exiles had been Edward's servants, his ecclesiastical officers. They were now harried out of their jobs, stripped of their badges of office and turned out of the country. What right had they to complain about Catholicism if England's lawful monarch chose to resurrect it? But their Edwardian legacy was stronger than this. Unerringly they underpinned their religious mission with their prophecy. They found that religious antagonisms could be redeployed, for Catholics had always been regarded more as offenders against God than against Edward's 'common order'. To some extent, though, the exiles acquired a sense of impotence, not because they doubted the validity of their commission, but because their fortunes had been so suddenly and firmly reversed. In this mood the prophets presented themselves as stifled individuals, silenced by their social opposites. 'Both at Paul's Cross and elsewhere are the trumpet-blowers not of Christ's gospel, but of the Romish Antichrist's dirty devilish decrees,' wrote Thomas Becon. Becon continued to act as the disseminator of prophetic advice, but the prophet had now become a curiously passive, muted figure: 'Remember this saying of the prophet Isaiah. In silence and hope shall your strength be: And this sentence also of Jeremiah. It is good with silence to tarry for the saving health of God'.³

3. Thomas Becon, A Comfortable Epistle to God's faithful people in England, Strasburg, 1554, B8.

Becon's lowest common denominator prophet was not an altogether uncommon figure. 'Fall to weeping with Nehemiah and Jeremiah to see the wall of Jerusalem broken, the city destroyed with sword and fire and the temple burnt,' ran the introduction to one treatise - a treatise that confined itself to a rather tame affirmation of Protestant doctrine.⁴ However, the passivity of these reactions was less important than the fact that the writer was set on the lowest rung of a spiralling scale of prophetic possibility. And the silent prophet may have been a protagonist in the drama of Becon's situation, but elsewhere, as we shall see, his writings were ridden with a religious tension that found expression in strident denunciation. This easy oscillation between the passive and the radical is something that we shall encounter at every stage of Marian thought. It was a function of another variable - the alternation between a sense of social weakness and a sense of social strength. Weakness because the exiles were small in numbers and rejected, strength because they were naturally aggressive in matters of religion, because they were gripped by the myth of their Edwardian triumphs and because they found from time to time that Mary's more secular subjects were equally anxious to topple her regime.

From the start, amongst many of the exiles, including men in every centre, prophecy already possessed its characteristic dynamism. William Turner provided the

4. The humble and unfained confession of the belief of certain poor banished men, 1554, A6-7.

clearest statement of the prophet's adjustment of role in the new situation and of his continuing militancy. 'I need not to rehearse,' he wrote, 'how sharply the prophets rebuked the kings and princes in the Old Testament, for ye know that they spared no man. Then if that the prophets, if Christ and his apostles, railed not, then rail I not, for I do none other thing than they did ... I have had commission of God and King Henry the eighth, and of King Edward his son, and of both their counsel's authority, to read and to interpret the scripture, and although that my authority that I had of the two forenamed princes be worn out and disannuled by the coming in of a new governor, I think in my conscience that I have yet still as much of God's commission remaining still, unabrogate by any man's power, that thereby I may call a wolf a wolf ...'⁵ It should also be noted, in view of his importance in Marian ideology, that John Ponet continued to enact his prophetic role in the new situation, making extensive use of prophetic denunciations of Catholics and sinners and of prophetic invocations to repentance. It was not ordinary ministers, but the 'prophets of God' - Edward's prophets - who had been 'mocked, scorned and murdered' in the course of two reigns. And when he wrote the following words in his 'Short Treatise' - 'Hark, hark... to the sentence of God pronounced by the mouth of his servant and prophet Isaiah' - if he was not explicitly taking upon himself the role of prophet, he was at the very least

5. William Turner, The hunting of the Romish Wolf, Emden, 1554, B2-3.

acting as his publicity agent.⁶

Did the English Genevan exiles display a greater attachment to the role of prophet than the exiles in other centres ? Though we know that most of the exiles were fairly strongly influenced by Calvin and Calvinism, as the record of the Edwardian Church proves, the more unreserved attachment to Calvin's teachings which the Genevan exiles possessed could lead to an immersion in Calvin's commentaries on the prophets and to an unusual realization of their relevance to the English situation. Bartholomew Traheron, in fact an exile at Wesel rather than Geneva, but a Calvinist of long-standing, gave a peculiarly vivid account of the prophet's mission. 'He (Isaiah)', wrote Traheron, 'witnesseth not the matter with a soft, faint, trembling, wavering, dark and doubtful voice, that few might hear it and understand it, but he cried with an assured mind, with great confidence and boldness, with an earnest zeal, desiring that his voice might clearly sound to the ears of all men. Such should all the witnesses of God's truth be, no whisperers, no dreamers, no faint and dark speakers, but criers. For this cause also it is necessary also for God's ministers to cry because men be not only dull and slow, but for the most part deaf to hear the truth.'⁷ Traheron, a prophet who claimed that he was not blowing a 'trumpet to malice', produced towards the end of exile a work of

6. John Ponet, A short treatise of politic power, 1556, p.16 in Winthrop S. Hudson, John Ponet, 1516?-1556: Advocate of Limited Monarchy, Chicago, 1942.

7. Bartholomew Traheron, An Exposition of a part of St. John's Gospel, 1557, 12.

sustained and abusive invective against Mary Tudor.⁸

In the same year, 1558, Antony Gilby produced from Geneva an 'Admonition to England and Scotland' that in the intensity and frequency of its prophetic rhetoric possessed a cumulative urgency and rage almost unparalleled amongst the exiles. The normal shrillness of the prophet now possessed a positive alarmism: 'Repent, we cry, Repent,' was Gilby's perennial demand. The impact of the prophet upon his hearers, according to Gilby, was a kind of wounding, a verbal violence.⁹ But the difference between Gilby and the other exiles was only relative and it must certainly be taken into account that Knox's excitement about the revolutionary potentialities in Scotland at this time electrified the atmosphere at Geneva. Christopher Goodman, writing earlier than Gilby and not to a Scottish nation in arms, made no more use of prophecy than exiles in other centres.

England's prophets gave vent to a literature of religious revulsion and its character extended without much discernable difference into every continental centre. In part Protestant statements were positive and educative, but they were usually set in context by biting exposés of the depravities of institutional Catholicism. William Turner's clarity of revolutionary purpose remained unaltered by exile. It was still to reveal the true character of his enemies to men 'unexpert in this kind of hunting'

8. Traheron, A warning to England to repent, 1558.

9. Antony Gilby, An Admonition to England and Scotland to call them to Repentance, 1558, in Knox, Works, Vol.4, pp. 555, 557.

by uncovering Catholic disguises. But to Turner at least religious polarizations were even more self-evident than before. His hidden fox had now turned into a marauding wolf.¹⁰ Much of Marian rhetoric amounted to a somewhat tiresome but nevertheless venomous reiteration of the same biblical themes. England was embarked upon a return to the 'flesh pots of Egypt' and the enemy, as always, was the 'arrant pocky proud whore of Babylon'.¹¹ Cliché rather than literary inventiveness may have been the Protestant forte, but it is evident that a man like Thomas Becon experienced a kind of poetic anguish as he surveyed the 'shipwreck of the Christian religion' and his English 'Jerusalem' turned into a 'heap of stones'.¹² Robert Pownall, in a less dignified mood, attacked the 'Romish boar and his swinish papistical pigs' - pigs which were polluting the English Church with the 'stinking dung of deceivable doctrine'.¹³ In particular the personal attacks of Protestants upon Catholic leaders were delightfully unrestrained. 'Who can think on that bloody beast Bonner,' wrote Bartholomew Traheron, 'but a most grisly, ugly and horrible monster shall be

10. Turner, *The hunting of the Romish wolf*, op. cit., A3

11. e.g. *An Answer to a certain godly man's letters*, 1557, B1; conclusion to translation of Stephen Gardiner, *De Vera Obedientia*, Rouen, 1553, 17; John Olde, *A confession of the most ancient and true Christian catholic old belief*, Emden, 1556, C6.

12. Becon, *A Comfortable Epistle*, op. cit., A4; Becon, *A humble supplication unto God for the restoring of his holy word unto the Church of England*, 1554, C3.

13. Robert Pownall, *An Admonition to the Town of Calais*, 1557, p.3.

presented before his eyes. ... But I will leave that bottomless den of most filthy stinking vices and pass further.'¹⁴ As usual John Bale excelled himself in these respects and his description of Gardiner as 'the great Hercules of stinking buggeries' was a mild link in a chain of obscenities, slanders and scurrilous anecdotes.¹⁵ The English exiles at Geneva diverged in no significant respect from this general pattern. Christopher Goodman and the others with consistent attacks upon the 'sworn soldiers of Antichrist', the 'filthy councils' of the papists and the 'kingdom of darkness' simply joined the general chorus.¹⁶

This obsessive prophetic outrage against Catholicism had been the main distinguishing feature of radical Protestantism since the days of the Henrician exile and naturally it lost none of its vibrancy in the Marian crisis. It was a basic and indispensable condition of the devastating attacks which in the course of the reign Protestants began to launch against their sovereign, Mary Tudor. But Protestant responses to Catholicism were sometimes more complex, less obvious than this. During the course of Mary's reign the secular face of radical Protestantism was fully exposed for the first time. So far we have only had a few tantalizing glimpses of this feature of the Protestant persona. But these have helped to prepare

14. Traheron, A warning, etc., op. cit., A8.

15. See in particular, Bale, A declaration of Edmund Bonner's articles, 1554.

16. Goodman, How superior powers ought to be obeyed, Geneva, 1558, e.g. pp. 17, 24, 33.

us for later developments; indeed without them it might be supposed that Protestant idealism had little or no significance for certain Marian ideologists. Why did this development occur? Mainly because Protestants began to realize that their only chance of political success in the new situation lay in establishing a rapport with the secular community. For most Englishmen still remained virtually untouched by Protestantism and the actual rebellions against Mary's regime were more motivated by the issue of Spanish influence than by religious discontentment.¹⁷ In these circumstances Protestants began to recapture and exploit the secular language of their Englishness.

John Ponet was the most notable exponent of Protestant secularism during the exile. Doubt has been cast by at least one writer as to his religiousness, and there has been general puzzlement at the secular character of his 'Short Treatise of Politic Power'.¹⁸ Certainly a cursory reading of this tract provides some evidence for the conclusion that Ponet's concerns were 'more profane than holy'. On the other hand, if this is so, the earnestness and fervency of his occasional expressions of anti-Catholicism and of Protestant zeal are difficult to explain. He attacked the 'beastly popish mass' and

17. D.M. Loades, *Two Tudor Conspiracies*, Cambridge, 1965; Anthony Fletcher, *Tudor Rebellions*, London, 1968, pp. 78-90.

18. Hudson, *op.cit.*, p.131; W.K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England from the beginning of the English Reformation to the Death of Queen Elizabeth*, London, 1932, p.54n.

wrote: 'Leave your idolatry and honour and worship God as ye were taught in blessed King Edward's time. Abhor the fond fantasies and foolish traditions of men and cleave to the sincere word of God'. The Protestant battle was with a 'viperous generation' - with 'hypocrites' and 'subtle wolves' - and he devoted meticulous and scathing attention to the religious perversion of the Catholic leaders - to Bonner, the son of an 'arrant whore' and now 'Archbutcher of London', and to Gardiner, 'the great devil and cut-throat of England.'¹⁹ The 'Short Treatise' is a problem that will have to be dealt with in subsequent chapters, but Ponet's 'Apology' of the same year (1556) confirms the Edwardian impression that he was paramountly a Protestant idealist. In this, with extensive quotations from the Bible and patristic sources, Ponet set out conscientiously to prove that popery was a 'most pestilent heresy mingled and made of a multitude of other perilous and blasphemous heresies'. 'When I consider the prophecies spoken before of this wicked generation, I cease marvelling and perceive well that they must needs be of that sort and number whom the Scripture nameth Painted Sepulcres, the company of sinners, the Church Malignant, the Synagogue of Satan...', he wrote. And in Ponet's description of priests as 'stinking bawdy lechers' and 'dunghills of all kind of dirty vices' he

19. Ponet, A Short treatise, etc., op.cit., pp.19, 181, 62, 63, 84.

proved himself nearly as much a master of the scurrilous phrase as John Bale.²⁰

But the new secularism took other forms than an apparent indifference to Protestantism. For Thomas Lever, England's religious plight acted as an evocation of his Englishness. After a long pilgrimage to what seemed a new homeland of the saints his concern still remained a renovation of the old homeland. 'Oh England, I an Englishman,' he wrote, '... have made, dedicate and send this little book unto thee as a token to witness my will and acknowledge my duty towards thee.'²¹ And the author of another staunchly Protestant tract described his commission in terms of his patriotism - his 'natural duty towards my country' - rather than in terms of his prophecy.²² On the issue of the Marian martyrdoms Christopher Goodman persistently escaped from a biblical framework to emphasise the motif of Englishness - a theme which he must have been aware intensified its ideological power. He claimed that Mary's officials were not merely 'merciless murderers of the children of God' but also

20. Ponet, An apology fully answering by scriptures and ancient doctors a blasphemous book ... against the godly marriage of priests, 1556, M2, E1, G5.

21. Thomas Lever, A treatise of the right way from danger of sin and vengeance in this wicked world, 1575 (reprint of 1556 edition), A5-6.

22. A faithful admonition of a certain true pastor and prophet ... translated into English, translator's preface, 1554, A2.

'tormentors of their own natural countrymen.'²³ This exploitation of both Protestant and English emotions was also employed by Ponet. Addressing Bonner, he wrote: 'What a murderer art thou of true Englishmen. What a tormentor of the people of God.'²⁴

But no writer made more important use of the idea of secular religion than William Turner. In fact it became the pivotal force of his whole argument. Turner addressed himself to the problems of a sick commonwealth - a commonwealth which like a natural body was diseased in its various organs. Its most serious disease was that its 'heads', the nobility, suffered from the crippling affliction of religious indifference and, even worse, the 'Romish pox'.²⁵ What was to be done for England in this state? Though this problem belongs in a later chapter, the line of argument can be briefly suggested here. In his earlier days Turner had simply urged the expulsion of popery, a defence of the 'city of God'. But, as we have seen, he had interestingly suggested on one occasion that this defence be undertaken by a militia of citizens. The restoration of the commonwealth to health and strength, even one suffering from religious diseases, would obviously ultimately have to be entrusted to its citizens and patriots, especially its 'natural heads',

23. Goodman, op.cit., p.36. See also pp. 62, 178.

24. Ponet, A short treatise, op.cit., p.64.

25. William Turner, A new book of spiritual physic, Emden, 1555, A2-7.

rather than to its saints and Protestants.

Several points have therefore emerged. With the exception of occasional moods of resignation, Marian Protestants responded to the new Catholicism with their customary prophetic rage. But acute secular discontentments also existed concerning Mary's rule - discontentments which were more important to the politically active classes than religion - and this resulted amongst some Protestants in a less exclusive attention to Protestantism than before. Protestants may have begun to talk and sound secular, or even profane, but I have tried to show that this could still co-exist with an untarnished Protestant idealism. But some Protestants began to talk of their religious idealism in secular terms: Catholicism was described by Turner and others as the occasion of religious and of secular tension. Naturally secular tensions would need secular solutions. Under Edward the sixth Protestants had tended largely, if not exclusively, to speak of their religious problems in religious categories and though they were inspired by the secular momentum of England's monarchy their agent of change was naturally a religious hero - a new Josiah. This option - the search for a religious instrument - was to retain its popularity amongst many Protestants in Mary's reign. But if religion was conceived of as a secular problem - a question of restoring England's commonwealth to its

religious fitness - religious responsibilities could then be assigned to secular agents. And Englishmen of course, assuming that they were lacking in semantic astuteness, might be readier to respond to challenges of this kind.

Chapter 2 England: The National Crisis

Several of the exiles therefore depicted Catholicism as a national as well as a religious outrage. But even more were preoccupied by a more obviously secular problem - the influence of Spain in English life.

In its Englishness as in its Protestantism the secular face of English Protestantism emerged from its former obscurity in Mary's reign. We saw before how English Protestants were sometimes inclined to lavish obsessive attention on their patriotic interests - so obsessive in fact that their religion almost became obscured.¹

In Mary's reign this became increasingly characteristic of Protestantism, whilst other Protestants devoted as much or nearly as much attention to their English as to their religious interests. I have already tried to show that John Ponet remained a religious zealot in Mary's reign and that therefore any political conclusions he may have arrived at presumably evolved partly at least out of his religious interests. The case of Ponet is paralleled by that of the author of 'Certain Questions demanded and asked by the Noble Realm of England'. Most of the author's questioning was about the ambitions of Spain, but a perceptive reader would also have been aware of a strong attack on the Marian persecution, a detailed demand for

1. See above Part 1, Section B, Chapter 2

vernacular worship and the enquiry 'Whether the Pope be God or God the Pope?'² Likewise the author of the rampantly anti-Spanish 'Lamentation of England' announced within long bursts of patriotic rhetoric that the mass was a 'shameful idol', that the Queen's religion was wicked and that friendship with Spain was a plot by priests to re-establish their 'devilish kingdom'.³ Throughout this chapter we shall therefore be dealing with Protestants, but Protestants who had acquired a consuming concern with their Englishness.

To Protestants, as to many other Englishmen, Mary Tudor's marriage in 1555 to Philip of Spain posed a comprehensive threat to English identity and this resulted throughout the course of her reign in a literature of exceptional virulence. As scare-raising combined itself with legitimate anxiety there was complete agreement that Spain endangered Englishness in its every aspect - from economic status to virility. English chauvinism, rampant for many years, reared its head as never before in the character assassination of Spain. 'There is no nation under the cope of Christ, like them in pride, cruelty, unmercifulness, nor so far from all humanity as the Spaniards be,' wrote John Ponet, and an anonymous Protestant in exile announced his contention with 'brutish, godless aliens', with the

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2. Certain Questions demanded and asked by the Noble Realm of England of her true natural children and subjects of the same, Zurich?, 1555, A3, A4, A6.
 3. The Lamentation of England, 1556, (Addition, 1558), A7, B5, A2. See also A4, B1.

'most vile and godless nation upon earth'.⁴ The potential threat could be illustrated by accounts of previous invasions of England - tales of robbery, slaughter, torture and devastation.⁵ Many writers endlessly catalogued the probable consequences of a connection with Spain - the impoverishment of the country, the transfer of offices to Spaniards, the loss of English troops in Spain's wars, the plundering of commercial vessels by the French, the capture of Calais and general military and economic bankruptcy for the country.⁶ The inference of John Ponet's whole chapter on the rights of subjects to their property could hardly have been lost on his readers.⁷ There was widespread agreement that matters of gross personal offence were involved. At Wesel, Bartholomew Traheron repeated a story familiar to U.S. servicemen in England, Englishmen in Scotland, and foreigners everywhere - that of deflowered virgins and ravished wives.⁸ And one writer reported that Spaniards on the continent were questioning Philip's acquaintance with 'such an old bitch' who might have been his mother.⁹

4. Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., p.167; Preface to 'A Faithful Admonition, etc.', op.cit., A1, A5.

5. Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., pp. 164-9; Pownall, An Admonition, etc., op.cit., p.9.

6. See in general The Lamentation of England, op.cit., and A Warning for England containing the horrible practices of the King of Spain, 1555.

7. Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., pp.79-97.

8. Traheron, A Warning, etc., op.cit., B2.

9. The Lamentation of England, op.cit., A6.

The protest of the Protestant exiles focussed on the fact that the whole national identity was at stake, that the homeland or at least its inhabitants were about to become a 'New Spain'. The record of Spain lent this claim some substance - the reduction of Naples, once the 'paradise of Italy' to misery and slavery, and particularly 'New Spain' itself, where an innocent and simple people had been driven by Spanish lust to suicide, desperation and even the consumption of their own children.¹⁰

Englishmen, wrote Ponet, were about to be carted as galley slaves to New Spain. William Kethe in his postscript to Christopher Goodman's Genevan pamphlet, 'How Superior Powers Ought to be Obeyed', echoed this theme. He warned Englishmen that Spaniards would devour their lands and lives and deflower their maidens and wives, and concluded 'When Spaniards are placed, ye must to New Spain'.¹¹ The English exiles at Geneva obviously had other concerns than religion and idolatry and in fact they participated fully in the common chauvinism. Christopher Goodman wrote a remarkable panegyric of Sir Thomas Wyatt for his defence of England against the foreign invader. His only reservation about Wyatt was that he had tended to make

10. Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., pp.93-4; A Warning for England, etc., op.cit.

11. William Kethe, postscript to Goodman, How Superior Powers Ought to be Obeyed, Geneva, 1558 (unpag.).

his country more than religion the focus of his rebellion, but Goodman's order of priorities was the same as that of Ponet, who wrote 'Next unto God men ought to love their country.'¹² Goodman's treatise was full of references to cruel and devouring strangers, proud Spaniards, unmerited foreign wars, the spoil of the nation and the need to defend it against invaders. His problem was not a religious indifferentism that excluded secular problems. On the contrary his involvement in the logic of nationalism was so acute that he was left baffled by the gullibility of his English contemporaries. Like his colleagues at Strasburg and elsewhere he invested the arrival of the 'adulterous Philip' with a doctrinaire obviousness. And Englishmen had to be brought face to face with their credulity. 'For do you think,' he wrote, 'that Philip will be crowned king of England and retain in honour English counsellors? Will he credit them with the government of his estate who have betrayed their own? ... Come they to make a spoil of the whole realm and leave you and yours untouched? Where is your great wisdom become? Your subtle counsels and policies, whereof you brag so much, to whom these things be hid, that every child espieth?'¹³

It will have become apparent by now that the exiles spoke about their patriotism in the ordinary

12. Goodman, op.cit., pp.202-13; Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., p.61

13. Goodman, op.cit., p.100; see also pp.135, 173-4, 204-9

secular language of Englishness - the language which we have already seen was so much a part of their Henrician and Edwardian legacy. It is true that Ponet cited the biblical example of the 'strange king' Eglon, who bribed the Israelites to betray their country to the Ammonites and the Amalekites - two peoples, according to Ponet, 'in beggarly pride and filthiness of life much like to the common nature of Italians and Spaniards', that Lever compared Philip of Spain to Ahab and England to Naboth and that Goodman took as his title-page text the words - 'The Lord hath brought upon them a nation from a far country, an impudent nation and of a strange language.'¹⁴ But the same factors as before were operating against these modes of description - the strength and resilience of the traditional language and the absurdity of identifying a religiously corrupt England too closely with God's sacred nation. The rhetoric of Englishness was the rhetoric of all the exiles who engaged with the problem of Spain. It was the rhetoric of Laurence Saunders when he bade farewell to the 'glory of England', of the translator of a Lutheran treatise when he spoke of the subversion of the 'laudable and ancient state' of the country, of Robert Pownall in remarking on the replacement of a 'faithful natural native king' by a

14. Ponet, *A short treatise, etc.*, op. cit., pp. 121-2; Lever, *A treatise of the right way, etc.*, op. cit., F4-5.

'superstitious unnatural foreign prince'.¹⁵ It was the rhetoric of Christopher Goodman in his appeals for the freedom of his 'natural country' and demands that 'traitors' become 'faithful Englishmen'.¹⁶ It was not God's Englishmen but simple Englishmen to whom the exiles appealed.

In Ponet's work - by contrast to that of the other exiles, Genevan and non-Genevan - this commonwealth protest was given reinforcement by a corroboration of its themes from classical literature and by abstract appeals to nature and its laws. By examples from ancient history (and also from English history) Ponet could counter the particularity of the Spanish threat with the universality of patriotism and its virtues. But Ponet's arguments obviously carried their greatest force in an example from contemporary history. The people of New Spain 'knew of Christ nothing at all, and of God no more than nature taught them', but the work of nature had been evident in the revulsion with which they greeted the Spanish assault on their self-respect.¹⁷ In none of this was Ponet a discordant voice amongst the exiles. All agreed that it was 'natural' for Englishmen to uphold

15. Laurence Saunders, *A true mirror or glass wherein we may behold the woful state of this our realm of England*, 1556, B3; Pownall, *Preface to translation of Wolfgang Musculus, The Temporizer*, 1555, A3; *Preface to A faithful Admonition*, etc., op. cit., A5.

16. Goodman, op. cit., pp. 180, 103-4, 202-13.

17. Ponet, *A short treatise*, etc., op. cit., pp. 93-4.

England and Ponet merely provided a wider cultural context for these unelaborated claims. In his 'First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women' John Knox made extensive use of assumptions about women which were allegedly common and natural to humanity. What Ponet proved in his 'Short Treatise' was not his ideological separation from the other exiles, but rather his intellect and culture and his willingness to exploit these in the interests of Englishness.

Patriotic anxiety about Spain embraced a fairly broad cross-section of the exiles. It was a central concern of Christopher Goodman at Geneva and of John Ponet at Strasburg. It preoccupied Bartholomew Traheron at Wesel and Robert Pownall at Aarau and a number of anonymous writers. But for numerous other writers popery and idolatry apparently formed a limit to their concern or imagination. How are we to explain these differences? Were some exiles Protestants and others secularists? Apparently not, for as we have seen Ponet, Goodman and the other exiles who grappled with the problem of Spain held firm Protestant convictions. Can the exiles be divided into Protestants and Protestant patriots then? This approach is no more helpful. For the reader of the earlier sections of this work could hardly avoid the conclusion that Thomas Becon was an unusually enthusiastic patriot.¹⁸ Yet Becon's two extant works from

18. See above Part 1, Section B, Chapter 2.

exile contain no more than one or two passing references to Spain and its threat to England.¹⁹ The problem can only be resolved by a political explanation. For those exiles who stuck to the straight and narrow path of religion were adopting a more cautious and defensive attitude towards the Marian regime than those who raised the issue of Spain. To become embroiled with the Spanish problem was virtually to invite counter-charges of treason. It tainted Protestants with the stigma of Wyatt and the other rebels who had opposed the government's foreign policy. It was hardly coincidental that the ultimate question of the 'Certain Questions' of 1555 was 'Whether it be treason to say God save the noble realm of England from the captivity, bondage and conquest of the vile Spaniards?'²⁰ This was the basic slur that had to be removed before Englishmen could discuss the problem of Spain candidly and honestly. It was the slur that must have held back Becon and others from giving vent to their anxieties about England's security. But for those Protestants on the other hand who managed to make the 'leap forward' into political opposition to the regime Spain ceased to be a stigma and became a political weapon. The contrast between Ponet's religious 'Apology' of 1556

19. Becon, A comfortable epistle, etc., op.cit.; A humble supplication, etc., op. cit.

20. Certain Questions demanded and asked by the Noble Realm of England, op. cit., A7.

and his anti-Spanish 'Short Treatise' of the same year was also the contrast between a defence (partially contrived) of Mary Tudor against Catholic treachery and an invitation to her deposition. Ponet and others realised that they were unlikely to muster support for a Protestant crusade in England: any rebellion that they managed to raise would be raised largely under the banner of patriotism.²¹ It therefore became the task of the political Protestant to establish a rapport with his fellow Englishmen on the grounds of their common patriotism. 'Who is a natural Englishman,' asked Ponet, 'that will not in time foresee and consider the misery towards his country and himself and by all means seek to let it.'²² For another ideologist, as we have seen, it was not enough to depict himself to others simply as a patriot. The 'Noble Realm of England' addressed 'certain questions' to her 'true natural children and subjects': the voice of the nation addressed the nation. 'England speaketh to the Englishmen,' he began.²³ This patriotism may have been a matter of political calculation, but it was entered into with enthusiasm and sincerity. Protestants had always been ready to channel all their energies into their Englishness and the 1550s brought a national crisis worthy of the effort. And it may

21. Fletcher, op. cit., pp. 85-90; Loades, op. cit.

22. Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., p.165

23. Certain Questions, etc., op. cit., A2

have been politically useful to exploit the vocabulary of Englishness, but this vocabulary happened to be entirely natural to the Protestant: ideologist and audience shared a common language.

Whatever they may have been prepared to put into print, it was clearly with a combination of religious and patriotic disgust that most English radical Protestants surveyed the Marian regime. And many Protestants were fully aware that within the nation as a whole there was far greater patriotic than religious opposition to the regime. It was partly because of their new sensitivity to this secular mood that Turner and others began increasingly to approach their religious problems from a secular angle. And we also noted in the last chapter that if religion assumed the form of a secular problem its solution would probably be entrusted to secular agents. Clearly the same applied to England's national difficulties. Of course there was no guarantee that Marian exiles would begin to think politically. They might have rooted themselves in the negativeness of their protests. But the bitterness and urgency of these protests suggested the likelihood of something more than a merely passive ideology. And as we shall see many exiles were beginning to nurture hopes that England would soon be restored to a more godly and natural form.

Chapter 3 The British Crisis: A Scottish Perspective

'We have many Noahs that ... crieth in our times, yet no man repenteth,' wrote Antony Gilby.¹ Isaiahs and Jeremiahs were to be found everywhere and Gilby was hardly laying claim to Geneva as a kind of exclusive club of prophets initiated by the personal hand of Calvin. But though prophecy linked all the exiles with a bond of shared anger there were important differences between the English prophets and John Knox.

The English exiles spoke of themselves collectively as prophets, frequently echoed the words of their Hebrew prototypes, but made personal affirmations of their prophetic role far less often than Knox. In part this must have been due to the fact that they never considered their tenure of this office to be in vital dispute. If Edward's regime had never officially stated prophecy to be an order in the Church, as Calvin did at Geneva, prophecy had become firmly institutionalized in the English Church. Specific claims to a prophetic role mainly needed to be asserted when it exceeded its normal scope of operation and threatened to violate privileged areas of political life. Hence Antony Gilby's claim to a prophetic office occurred in the context of his suggestion that

1. Antony Gilby, *An Admonition, etc.*, in Knox, *Works*, op.cit., Vol.4, p.556.

he conduct a personal destruction of idolatry, Robert Crowley's in the context of his 'rash enterprise' in parliament and William Turner's in exile in the context of a similar mission to parliament.²

These English prophets at least started from a base of acceptability. In addressing Catholic Scotland it became necessary for Knox to lay claim to his right to exercise the basic exhortatory and threatening functions of prophecy, not merely its political pretensions. Knox's most personal claims - the categorical statements of who he was and what he was - occurred not in his letters to England, but in those to the Scottish regent and Scottish nobility. Mary of Guise's assumption of Knox's legal inconsequentiality had to be set against the 'divinity that hedges a prophet'. 'Judge not the matter after the vileness of my body,' wrote Knox, 'whom God hath appointed ambassador and messenger unto you, but with reverence and fear consider Him whose message I bear.' Aware that to Mary he was no more than a common and impudent citizen, Knox countered her political élitism with the notion of Christian equality: 'Madam ... deeply consider that God useth men (yea and most commonly those that be of lowest degree and most abject before the world) to be his messengers and ambassadors ...'³ The claim to legitimate office

2. See above Part 1, Section B, Chapter 6, and below Chapter 6 (2)

3. Knox, Works, op. cit., Vol.4, p.458

and the duty to respond with deference and respect to this office was equally rampant in his 'Appellation' to the nobility and people of Scotland. 'As it was commanded to Ezechial boldly to proclaim, so I must cry to you,' he wrote.⁴ Scotland's traditional and socially accepted notions of legitimacy were thus bombarded with a new legitimacy - that of the prophet.

But there was more to Knox's self-justifications than the insecurities produced by a society that branded him as an upstart. Alone amongst the exiles Knox publicly reproached himself for the inadequacies of his prophetic efforts. 'Alas!' he wrote, 'how blinded was my heart and how little I did consider the dignity of that office ... alas! this day my conscience accuseth me that I spoke not so plainly as my duty was to have done ... The blind love that I did bear to this my wicked carcase was the chief cause that I was not faithful enough in that behalf.'⁵ Knox's self-consciousness about his prophecy was more than a formal and official vindication of himself to Scotland's authorities. It was also a sense of self-importance, a sense of special responsibility. 'I am a man sent of God to call this people and you again to the true service of God,' he told the Scottish nobility.⁶ This was more than a simple demand for protection

4. Ibid, p.519.

5. Ibid, Vol. 3, pp. 269-70.

6. Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 474

against Catholic oppression. Knox constructed his 'Appellation' around the theme of his personal condemnation by the Scottish clergy after his return to Geneva from Scotland in 1556. In this way he was able to make himself the personal symbol of the whole persecution. Knox's sense of religious grievance was probably no greater than that of the ordinary English exile, but we have noted before that he was a more politically motivated, energised individual than the English Protestant. By 1547 the experience of Scottish Protestantism was one of strife, effort and political opposition. But insofar as secular forces had enabled Protestantism to outstrip its natural strength, Protestants with professional capabilities were still rare and the movement selected its leadership out of the few professional talents available to it. Eleven years later with the return of preachers like Willock and Harlow there might have been rather more scope for Knox to regard himself as a member of a team ministry, but he rose to power in a situation that encouraged him to think of himself as Scotland's prophet.

It was therefore hardly surprising that Knox was fascinated by charismatic individuals like Moses and by their charismatic acts. 'The power of God's word, pronounced by the mouth of a man, prevailed at one time in a great number against nature and compelled them to be executors of God's vengeance,' he wrote of the

slaughter of the sons of Levi by their own brethren.⁷

Abstract descriptions of his prophetic role were ultimately no satisfaction of Knox's need. The biography of the prophet had to be made his own biography. Here, in the particularity of an individual's history, the shifting fortunes of the prophet evoked in the reader excitements and inspirations emanating from contact with a life very like his own. The history of the prophet Jeremiah, rejected by an idolatrous people after the death of a youthful and pure king, produced from Knox in the course of a long narrative a rhetoric of empathy. 'Great was the uproar against the poor prophet,' he wrote, '... what anguish was this in his heart ... no other comfort had the prophet than to complain to his God.'⁸ In the 'Appellation' the troubles of Jeremiah and also of Paul became more than a convenient means of proving the justice of Knox's own case. They proved Knox a current member of a long and honourable linear succession of prophets. 'Seeing that my battle,' wrote Knox, 'is against the proud and cruel hypocrites of this age, as that battle was against the false prophets and malignant Church of their ages, neither ought any man to think it strange that I compare myself with them with whom I sustain a common cause.'⁹

7. Ibid, Vol.3, p.311.

8. Ibid, pp. 181-6.

9. Ibid, Vo.4, pp. 479-80.

Of all the exiles Scotland's prophet came nearest to the massiveness of his Hebrew prototype - to the transcendence of social loneliness by the potency of an exceptional link with God and His instruments in history. This invested Knox with a greater sense of urgency, with an acuter sense of political possibility than the English exiles - qualities which of course were already in evidence during his period in England. And in his ordinary perspectives on the religious crises in England and Scotland we shall see how Knox was quicker and more persistent than the English exiles in invoking visions of terror and plague. This we must look at in the next chapter. It suggests again a greater determination to solve the crisis of the 1550s - a determination emanating from Knox's unique sense of political responsibility. But in his sense of grievance at the Catholic enemy - and it is this that we are concerned with here - Scotland's prophet spoke with a bitterness no greater than we have already observed in England's prophets.

Like Thomas Becon Knox surveyed with anguish the 'great shipwreck of God's true religion'. Like the other exiles, who were all uniformly nauseated by the 'bloody altar of the bloodthirsty bread god - the Romish idol', Knox consistently expressed his religious disgust with Catholicism. 'More abominable idolatry,' he wrote, 'was never in the earth than is that which of late is now set up again by your pestilent papists among

you'. The leaders of the conspiracy against Christ's Church were the same profane trinity recognized by the other exiles - 'wily Winchester, dreaming Durham and bloody Bonner' - together with the 'rest of their bloody butcherly brood' ... 'obedient servants to the devil'.¹⁰ After 1556 Knox increasingly turned his attention to Scotland, though still remaining concerned with the religious problems of the whole 'Island of Great Britain'. This reflected the growth of the movement of the Congregation - a movement which can be seen gathering in embryo around Knox during his visit to Scotland in 1555-6 - and which from the end of 1557 began to make strident Protestant demands to the Regent. It would be futile in this context to document in full Knox's attacks upon Catholicism in his letters to Scotland. They were as repeated and as venomous as in his letters to England: 'The pride, ambition, envy, excess, fraud, spoil, oppression, murder, filthy life and incest that is used and maintained amongst that rabble of priests, friars, monks, canons, bishops and cardinals cannot be expressed'. The 'Papistical Church' was more degenerate than the Church of the Jews when it crucified Christ.¹¹

In its religious orientation the domestic rhetoric of the Lords of the Congregation entirely echoed that of Knox. The Lords persistently complained about a 'most unjust tyranny', about the 'wicked, slanderous

10. Ibid, Vol.3, p.285.

11. Ibid, Vol.4, p.513

and detestable life of the prelates'. The famous 'Common Band' to which several of the nobility subscribed in December 1557 was a totally religious manifesto and perhaps the work of the Earl of Argyll's chaplain, John Douglas. Argyll, Glencairn, Morton and the others agreed to promote Protestant ministers and to defend them 'against Satan and all wicked powers that does intend trouble or tyranny against the ... Congregations.' Particularly interesting were several attempts to emphasize the single-mindedness of this religiousness and to advertise the one-dimensional character of the Congregation's orientation. 'This cruel, unjust and most tyrannical murder, intended against towns and multitudes, was and is the only cause of our revolt from our accustomed obedience,' they wrote. Intervention in non-religious issues was specifically disclaimed: 'as to the obedience of our sovereign's authority in all civil and politic matters we are and shall be as obedient as any other your grace's subjects within the realm'. It is also of particular interest that Knox himself when he returned to Scotland from exile in May 1559 defended the Congregation to the nobility on the grounds of its exclusively religious concerns. We 'seek nothing but God's glory to be advanced, vice to be suppressed and virtue to be maintained in this poor realm,' he wrote.¹²

Now we have already noted the intense patriotic

12. Ibid, Vol. 1, pp. 302-6, 273-4, 326, 366, 339 (my italics).

concerns of the English Marian exiles. It seems though that we may at last have discovered Michael Walzer's narrowly, obsessively inclined religious zealot. But not in an ordinary Genevan - in a Scottish Genevan. The position, however, is more complicated than this. For a curious demarcation exists in the ideology of the Lords of the Congregation - a sudden and virtually unanticipated 'leap forward' from the religious to the secular during September 1559. In a major proclamation the Lords claimed that in addition to religious repression 'lay there another serpent lurking in the breast of our adversaries' - namely to 'bring you and us both under the perpetual servitude of strangers'. Here and in subsequent manifestos this theme, principally, and also other domestic grievances were expanded. Essentially, in its language and in its combination of current offence with wild scare-raising, it formed a close parallel to earlier English reactions to the threat of 'strangers'. Its categories were non-theological - a secular conceptualization of the values of ordinary Scottishness. The nobility lamented 'the enterprised destruction of their commonwealth and overthrow of the liberty of their native country'. Complaints of robbery, spoliation and conquest were rampant. All things - wives, children, houses and substance - were at the mercy of the 'unbridled lust's desire' of the French. Scotland's foreign trade was

about to be brought to an end in the interests of France.¹³

Was this sudden volte-face in the ideology of the movement a reflection of Knox's declining influence as its secretary? It has been suggested that his strenuous efforts to undergird the Congregation with a religious dynamic were attempts by a religious purist to prevent the contamination of the movement by secular forces - a contamination which in fact occurred when the issue of French influence in Scotland became central.¹⁴ It is notorious that a new restraint appeared in Knox's advice to the Congregation as Chatelherault began to take an interest in their cause. Chatelherault - the former Earl of Arran - had turned against the Protestants after briefly presiding over a pro-English and semi-reformist regime in 1543. He, together with his faction, had been and continued to be a 'cruel persecutor of Christ's members' and Knox warned against the promotion of 'those that seek authority and pre-eminence of worldly glory'.¹⁵ In retrospect Knox claimed that the expansion of the movement had resulted in its perversion. God's elect had been swamped by an arrogant, egoistical multitude. The old dirty war game had proved too strong for the new crusade. 'When we were but a few number,' he wrote, 'in comparison of our enemies, when we had

13. Ibid, pp.405, 444, 401

14. See for instance J.H. Burns, *The Theory of Limited Monarchy in Sixteenth Century Scotland*, unpublished Aberdeen University Ph.D. thesis, 1952, pp.204, 198-200, 158-60.

15. Knox, *Works*, op.cit., Vol.4, p.285.

neither Earl nor Lord (a few excepted) to comfort us, we called upon God; we took Him for our protector, defence and only refuge. ... But since that our number hath been thus multiplied, and chiefly since my Lord Duke his Grace with his friends hath been joined with us ... the best of us all, that before felt God's potent hand to be our defence, hath of late days put flesh to be our arm.¹⁶

Knox's analysis was substantially correct.¹⁷ But the worldly contamination to which he referred was the particularism and self-seeking of factions. It was not the Scottish patriotism that embraced the common interest of all. This he was fully sympathetic to. The affirmations of religious purism in which Knox and the Congregation indulged may have been believed or partially believed at the time, but they were fragile under the pressure of circumstance. Ultimately they were political rather than doctrinaire. Interest in the threat of France could be disclaimed as long as this served the cause of religion. English exiles like Thomas Becon had discovered that it was unwise to give vent to their concern as patriots. Religious demands, on the other hand, could be typified as matters of individual conscience (a theme the Congregation strongly stressed) and the attack, especially in Scotland, not so much against the secular system as against a relatively autonomous ecclesiastical institution.

16. Ibid, p.471.

17. Ibid, Vol.1, pp. 273-4, 326, 359, 366.

Oppositionist rhetoric thus became initially defensive - a demand that bishops and papists be replaced by Protestant ministers rather than an impertinent intervention in the matters of state of the Scottish government. But a more positive incentive also contributed to the Protestant silence about French ambition - the hope that Mary of Guise might be induced to offer concrete concessions to Protestantism. This remarkable delusion - that Protestantism might jump to power on the back of a Regent tied to French Guisian ambition - was a product of unusually unfavourable strategic circumstances - the weakness of a Hamilton faction in any case ambivalent about Protestantism and the emergence of a Catholic regime in England. In turn Mary of Guise hoped to enlist the support of the Protestant lords against her Catholic rivals - the Hamiltons. For a time therefore Protestant zealots and a Catholic regent assiduously cultivated each other. Knox wrote a very moderate letter to Mary in 1556 and Henry Balnaves obsequiously thanked her for her mercy after the 1547 St. Andrews episode.¹⁸ The commissioners who went to France to arrange the marriage of the Queen of Scots with the French dauphin included leading Protestant laymen like Stewart and Cassilis. In return Mary offered the Protestants valuable material gains, including commercial

18. Ibid, Vol. 4, pp. 73-84; Scottish Correspondence of Mary of Lorraine, op. cit., pp. 371-8.

privileges, and perhaps more importantly, incentives for religious hope.¹⁹

The new Protestant ideology of the nation in the autumn of 1559 was not a capitulation of the movement before contaminating secular forces. On the contrary, it corresponded with a simple political fact - the provision of undeniable evidence that the old strategy of collusion with the Regent had failed. The spreading influence of France in the country had in fact long been a source of anxiety to the Congregation. The protagonists of what was still innocently claimed to be no more than a religious movement had stayed the printing irons to prevent the further debasement of the coinage, had denounced the French as an intolerable burden on the country, and had tried to persuade the Regent to remove her foreign troops from Perth and Leith.²⁰ These complaints belonged mostly to 1559, but it is highly significant that as early as October 1557 Knox had complained from Dieppe of no less than a national betrayal: 'thralldom and misery shall apprehend your own bodies, your children, subjects and posterity, whom ye have betrayed ... and presently do fight to betray them and your realm to the slavery of strangers.'²¹ In August and September 1559 new large contingents of French troops arrived.²² It was now time to drop the

19. Ibid.

20. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.1, pp.371-2, 346, 367, 370, 379.

21. Ibid, p.271.

22. Ibid, p.396.

old poses. Tactically it had been expedient to feign innocence even when it was obvious that the Regent, having used the Congregation, was ready to discard it. The collection of an army removed all secrecy from her confrontation with Scottish dissent. In return, in the interests of self-survival, the Congregation no longer had any reason to conceal the fact that its quarrel with the Regent was more than a religious one.

Once the Regent had made confrontation inevitable it became necessary to exploit her patriotic fallibility - an appeal, unlike the old religious propaganda, attractive to the whole community. To make this appeal it was unnecessary for the Protestant lords to learn a new language and the movement was not suddenly swamped by non-Protestant patriots. It was precisely to incite the latter that the Lords made their appeal, for the French invasion probably provoked the greatest reaction amongst the existing Congregation, who were particularly sensitive to the Regent's political manoeuvres and to the religious consequences of her assistance from France.²³

23. There is considerable evidence of a strong religious leadership in the early Congregation. Knox's preaching tour in 1555-6, which both responded to and stimulated the growth of dissent, was concentrated on the traditional centres of Protestant support - Angus and the Mearns, Fife and Kyle in Ayrshire. (Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.1, pp.245-254). For Stewart's religious sincerity see Maurice Lee, James Stewart Earl of Moray, New York 1953. Sadler spoke enthusiastically of the wisdom and religious dedication of the Earl of Glencairn. (The State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, op.cit., Vol.1, p.83) The Earl of Argyll employed the Protestant John Douglas as his preacher.

'The greatest part of the nobility.' wrote Knox, 'and many of the people were so enchanted by her treasonable solicitations that they could not hear or credit the truth plainly spoken.'²⁴ Thus on September 19th the Lords delivered an extraordinarily powerful and persuasive secular sermon. Principle and self-interest were employed together in a massive attempt to draw Church and nation together: 'Brethren, let us join our forces and both with wit and manhood resist their beginnings, or else our liberties hereafter shall be dearer bought. Let us surely be persuaded "When our neighbour's home be on fire, that we dwell not without danger".' There was apparently no concern that secular forces would contaminate the movement. On the contrary, to men who wrote because of the 'love of our native country' patriotism could only purify it. 'If religion be not persuaded unto you,' wrote the Lords, 'yet cast ye not away the care ye ought to have over your commonwealth, which ye see violently and manifestly ruined before your eyes.'²⁵ Knox seems to have entirely concurred in the new 'Scottish' ideology of the Congregation. He reported it fully and without criticism in his 'History'. And he wrote of the French invasion: 'Prudent men foresaw that she pretended nothing but a plain conquest.'²⁶

24. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.1, p.397.

25. Ibid, pp. 400, 407.

26. Ibid, p.397.

For Knox the crisis of the 1550s was thus not merely a religious crisis; it was also a national crisis. In this he agreed entirely with the English exiles. He reacted, as we have seen, with the same rage as English Protestants to Marian Catholicism. And in the course of his 'Faithful Admonition' of 1554 he produced a defence of English pride, power and wealth that in its frenzy and enthusiasm exceeded anything that any English exile ever produced. 'And now doth she not manifestly show herself to be an open traitress to the Imperial Crown of England,' he wrote of Mary Tudor, 'contrary to the just laws of the realm, to bring in a stranger and make a proud Spaniard king to the shame, dishonour and destruction of the nobility; to the spoil from them and theirs of their honours, lands, possessions, chief offices and promotions; to the utter decay of the treasures, commodities, navy and fortifications of the realm; to the abasing of the yeomanry, to the slavery of the commonalty, to the overthrow of Christianity and God's true religion; and finally to the utter subversion of the whole public estate and commonwealth of England ?' There was an almost jingoistic quality about Knox's attack on Stephen Gardiner, about his anxiety that 'England should be England'. 'Rememberest thou not,' he wrote, 'that England hath brought thee forth ? that England hath nourished thee ? that England hath promoted thee to riches, honour and high promotion ? And wilt thou now, Oh wretched caitiff, for all these manifest benefits received be the cause that England shall not

be England.'²⁷ All this was at once a sincere affirmation of nationalistic outrage and also an exploitation of it. Knox must have been aware that he was saying what Englishmen were saying and what they wanted to hear. It contained just the same element of surprise as Ponet's 'Short Treatise' and other English nationalist tracts - the surprise of a new voice switched on, a hidden side to an old persona revealed. But there was a difference. Knox's English nationalism was sincere, passionate and eloquent, but it still had the aspect of a secular invader in an otherwise biblical panorama. Knox began his 'Faithful Admonition' with his usual attacks on idolatry, his usual demands for repentance. In the middle of the tract he suddenly launched into a new theme - the theme of Englishness. But just as suddenly as he had begun it, he stemmed the patriotic flood, returned to the old religious themes and continued on to the end of the tract as if nothing had happened to interrupt the general Protestant flow. It was hardly surprising that Knox could never lavish the same prolonged attention on patriotic issues as some of his English contemporaries. His Scottish background tended to preclude the possibility. In the 1540s it had been extraordinarily difficult for Scottish Protestants to pose as patriots. Indeed many Protestants, including Knox, had probably been troubled by a nagging guilt.

27. Ibid, Vol.3, pp.295-8.

that they were selling out the nation to England. The liaison with Mary of Guise in the 1550s resurrected these old fears. Once more Scottish Protestantism found it had to jettison its Scottishness to uphold its Protestantism. But the dilemma was in any case lessened by the fact that Scots were less touchy about their national integrity than Englishmen, more conditioned to foreign interference in their national affairs. Of course when the interests of religion could no longer be served by the foreign patron nation, as occurred in the case of France in the course of 1559, the Protestant's Scottishness gladly and sincerely liberated itself from its self-imposed shackles. But before this there had been the spectacle - surely ignominious to any English Protestant - of Scottish Protestants joining Mary of Guise in all the pomp and ceremony of a marriage alliance with France. Even before Protestants got themselves entangled with the Regent their country was as firmly wedded to France (through the influence of individuals like Mary of Guise and the French ambassador, D'Oysel) as England at the same time was to Spain. In England there was a howl of outrage at the connection with Spain, in Scotland little more than a murmur of discontent at the creeping influence of France. Some Scots during these years blandly took to referring to 'the King's service and the weal of the country' as though they were entirely compatible interests.²⁸ Of course with the large

28. Scottish Correspondence of Mary of Lorraine, op. cit., p.360.

incursions of French troops during 1559 the whole matter took on a new perspective, but Scottish patriotism was obviously far less easily stimulated than English patriotism. When it finally broke surface Knox seems to have enthusiastically concurred in the Congregation's new ideology. He was fully capable of responding to the autonomous force of Scottishness - to the rhetoric of liberty and independence - without seeking its authorization in an Old Testament model. His imagination was not encapsulated in a biblical shell. But his heart was much more often at the communion table than at the council table. This, as we have seen, was rather less true of the typical English exile, including Knox's Genevan colleagues. For Knox, the crisis of the 1550s was not just religious, but it was certainly this first and foremost. And it was therefore a crisis that would have to be resolved by saints rather than by citizens.

Chapter 4 Apocalypse and Plague

The Marian exiles responded with rage and bitterness to the collapse of religious purity and national pride in England and Scotland in the 1550s. Sheer complaint could provide its own satisfactions, its own release from tensions and prevent a more constructive confrontation with the problems involved. But it was hardly likely that the exiles would be content with simply giving vent to their feelings; their sense of grievance was too acute. Exile may have provided them with hospitality, employment and religious purity, but it was still exile. With a desperate sense of loss, an urgent desire for change, the exiles spent much of their time dreaming about the future - alternately gripped by fear and elated by hope.

Out of these grievances, these hopes and these fears political activists were to emerge - men who aimed to change the conditions in England and Scotland by force. In essence it was this same web of emotions that had produced a crusading spirit amongst these same men in the years before exile. Everything in their record in those years suggests that they were social individuals - social in their alienation, their hopes, their fears, their sense of action. But after the godly experience of Edward's reign Mary's accession and all that followed, filled many Protestants with a new sense of disgust and at times a sense of social

hopelessness. In fact it is apparent that for some exiles paradise sometimes seemed a more realistic goal to aim at than a renovated homeland. Despite their reputation as social revolutionaries the Calvinists among the exiles were as prone to this mood as the other exiles. Miles Coverdale, for instance, the former Bishop of Exeter and a Genevan exile, addressed men 'in the high way to heaven's bliss' and asked 'Are you not travelling to your heavenly city of Jerusalem, where all is joy and felicity ?'¹ Exilic translations of Calvin tended to focus on his most quietistic works - the works which emphasized the achievement of bliss in heaven as the ultimate in human aspiration. The motifs were the conventional ones of an estranged humanity, living a 'frail and unsure life' and seeking only a city to come - the 'heavenly Jerusalem'.²

These were hardly likely to be textbooks for political rebels. For the rebel was obviously likely to be an individual with social aspirations. But he might still be the same person as the individual who sometimes spoke of heaven as his only goal and objective. For the ideologies of the exile were extraordinarily volatile. And in no exile was this more strikingly

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1. Miles Coverdale, An exhortation to the carrying of Christ's cross, 1554?, A7. This work assigned tentatively by Pollard and Redgrave (see bibliography) to 1550 clearly belongs by internal evidence to Mary's reign.
 2. John Calvin, Certain homilies of M. John Calvin, 1553, F5, C3.

demonstrated than in John Knox. Knox finished the exile as a political rebel committed to the creation of a Protestant Scotland. He began it as a semi-dedicated martyr with his sights firmly set on eternity. His letters of 1553 repeatedly emphasised the glory of the great 'general assembly' in the skies. Troubles, he wrote, were 'very profitable for God's chosen people ... to engender in us a thirst and desire of the life everlasting.'³ It was hardly surprising that exiles like Knox should have turned away, temporarily at least, from social consolations. They were witnessing the systematic suppression, perhaps destruction, of English Protestantism. But as opposition to Mary grew the old deep-rooted sense of social mission began to return. And, just as easily, reversals of fortune - the collapse of rebellions, the resilience of the regime - could resurrect the old pessimism, confirm the nagging feeling that England was lost for ever and only heaven to be gained.

The exact relationship between circumstance and attitude is impossible to assess. It varied from writer to writer and sometimes appears almost chaotic in character. For instance, Robert Pownall, whose works in 1554 and 1557 were animated by visions of a new English Jerusalem, produced in 1556 a remarkably passive and asocial work. 'The afflictions of this world', he proclaimed, were 'not worthy of the glory to come', the

3. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.3, p.400. See also pp.341, 343, 397.

'earthly mansion' a poor replica of its heavenly counterpart.⁴ Perhaps Pownall found less grounds for encouragement in the Dudley Conspiracy of 1556 than in the Wyatt Rebellion of 1554, whilst by 1557 there is some evidence to suggest that he had been influenced by Ponet's radical work.⁵ Or perhaps his moods alternated more randomly - between general despair at a continuing exile and elation at the always possible prospect of Mary's downfall. In the case of John Scory, former Edwardian Bishop of Chichester and exile at Emden, this rapid oscillation between two widely differing expectations was confined within a single tract - further evidence that the passive aspirations of some of the exiles should be treated with considerable caution. Scory's work, addressed in sympathy to the potential martyrs in prison in England, lauded the virtues of suffering and the 'better' and 'enduring substance' in heaven awaiting the persecuted. Equally the fate Scory envisaged for their persecutors was an eternal rather than an earthly one - the horrors of the 'bottomless pit' and the 'great winevat of the Lord's indignation'. But in the last and climactic sentence of the tract the social hope that lay behind Scory's sense of hopelessness burst overtly to the surface. The deferrment of success, about which he had spoken so much earlier, obviously

4. Robert Pownall (trans.), A most pithy and excellent epistle to animate all true Christians unto the cross of Christ, E7-8.

5. Pownall, An Admonition, etc., op.cit. The arguments for resistance against Mary (p.15) correspond closely to Ponet's. See below Chapter 6 (6).

lived at tension in his mind with an acute impatience. He left his readers with a vision of the 'English Jerusalem', its walls rebuilt, and the 'captivity of Sion' turned away.⁶

This idea of a future English apocalypse was one of the most potent inspirations of the exiles. Before 1553 most English Protestants had been scathing in their criticisms of England's religious condition. Their most pressing aspiration was not to turn England into a religious paradise; it was somehow or other to ward off the impending Marian plague. In exile hopes were expressed for the return of a godly monarch - a 'faithful Asa', a Hezekiah or even another 'mighty Josiah'.⁷ This was a realistic aspiration, but it was one that would still leave many of the old problems unresolved. And the exiles were no longer in a practical mood. Having lost everything, they wanted to gain everything. They wanted nothing less than a brand new, sparkling, purified society - an English Jerusalem. This Johannine image, proclaimed by John Foxe and several others,⁸ was the most popular of the idioms of hope, but some exiles assimilated it with other prophetic images. 'When thou shalt deliver the people out of captivity,' wrote Thomas Becon, 'then

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6. John Scory, An epistle written unto all the faithful that be in prison in England or in any other trouble for the defence of God's truth, Emden, 1555. A3-4, A8, B6-7, B8.
 7. John Bale, The vocation of John Bale to the bishopric of Ossory in Ireland, 1553, B8.
 8. See William Haller, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation, London, 1963.

shall Jacob rejoice and Israel be right glad.'⁹

And Christopher Goodman inspired his readers with the vision of a powerful, prosperous and godly England, an England 'esteemed of all nations the wisest and mightiest people upon the earth, as God promised to Israel.'¹⁰

The converse of apocalyptic hope was prophetic terror, 'Let stinking Babylon fall down and the new and heavenly Jerusalem be built up again,' wrote Becon.¹¹ It will have become apparent from previous sections that the notion of plague could serve two main emotional purposes for Protestants. First, it gave expression to their simple relish in the impending destruction of the ungodly - a relish Becon, for instance, made no attempt to conceal. 'Oh Lord,' he wrote, 'haste thou to root them up from the face of the earth ... Rain thou fire, brimstone, storm and tempest upon them ... Let the swords that they draw out go through their own hearts and the bows that they have bended slay themselves ... Break their teeth (Oh God) in their mouths...'¹² It became a commonplace for Protestants to indulge themselves in dreams of carnage - in the drowning of Pharaoh, the suicide of Nero, the hanging of Judas 'till all his guts burst forth'.¹³

9. Becon, A humble supplication, etc., op.cit., E3-4, D5-8.

10. Goodman, op.cit., pp. 193-4, 105.

11. Becon, A humble supplication, etc., op.cit., E3.

12. Ibid, E2-3.

13. An Admonition to the bishops of Winchester, London and others, Rouen, 1553, A6-8; see also The Lamentation of England, op.cit., B2.

But Protestants were also prone to warn of plagues so horrific and extensive that any question of enjoyment or relish was impossible. This sense of calamity became especially prevalent during the second half of the exile. Prophecies of future destruction, spoliation and carnage became rampant in this period and nearly all writers seemed agreed that England was about to be consumed and destroyed.¹⁴ John Ponet led the way in this new chorus. Destruction, he claimed, was inevitable: 'Read all the histories of the Bible and the prophecies of the prophets and ye shall evidently see how people and nations have been destroyed for maintaining of such idolaters and wicked livers.'¹⁵ God's 'grievous visitation' was imminent as well as inevitable. It was 'near at hand'; 'it cannot be avoided,' wrote Antony Gilby.¹⁶ Other writers strongly stressed the same theme of a completely proximate calamity.¹⁷

But none of this prophetic panic seems to have occurred before 1556 and much of it not before 1557 and 1558. John Knox was issuing exactly the same warnings in 1554 soon after Mary's accession. In fact he devoted a full half of his 'Godly Letter' of that

14. e.g. Pownall, *An Admonition*, etc., op.cit., pp.1, 3, 6-7. 9-11, 16; Traheron, *A Warning*, etc., op.cit., A2, B2, B4, B7.

15. Ponet, *A short treatise*, etc., op.cit., pp.173-6.

16. Gilby, *An Admonition*, etc., op.cit., in Knox, *Works*, op.cit., Vol.4, pp.569, 567.

17. e.g. *Lamentation of England*, op.cit., A2-3.

year to the theme. He claimed an absolute 'assurance' that England would be plagued because God's justice was 'immutable and inviolable'. 'No more may England escape God's vengeance,' he wrote, 'than God himself may lose His justice.'¹⁸ Why was Knox so much quicker off the mark than the other exiles? Simply because of his uniquely activist character, his sense that it was his own and England's responsibility to alter England's fate, and that failing this the forces of darkness could only prove even more triumphant than before.

The English exiles, on the other hand, though equally distressed at England's sin, were less politicized than Knox and more inclined to entrust solutions to God. They could therefore more afford to indulge themselves in optimistic visions of an English Jerusalem and the destruction of their enemies. These aspirations were important: they signified a strong sense of social ambition. But it was to take two, three or four more wearisome years of exile before any significant number of English Protestants were driven to the realization that their social ambitions would probably only be achieved by their own and England's political action. Like Knox they were forced into a political confrontation with the forces of evil and they were shaken by the prospect - so shaken that like Knox they began to fear a calamitous outcome. But calamity would obviously have to be averted, even if it meant a struggle

18. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.3, pp. 163-91.

to the death. A lesser plague might have to be enacted to avert God's greater plague.

These more exaggerated premonitions of Protestants were therefore particularly likely to lead to demands for drastic and instant action. But whatever the degree of the Protestant's apprehension it was obvious that his deep concern for the future would continue, as in the 1540s, to invest him with an imperative for action - a need for a crusade against his enemies - whether the agent was to be God or himself or even a repentant queen. But where exactly would the political world stand in this confrontation ? On the side of the godly ? On the touchline ? Or in the ranks of the enemy ?

Chapter 5 Exile and the Political World

Before 1553 English Protestants looked enthusiastically to Edward the sixth to act as the architect of their social crusade. The two sides of the Protestant's political persona - his desire to be a loyal subject and his political idealism - tended to complement one another: actual rule tended to be godly rule. After 1553 this harmony was torn apart. The Protestant's two chief enemies were the Pope and Spain, and in each case it was his monarch who was chiefly responsible for their introduction into English society. It was Mary who insisted not merely on a resurrection of Catholicism, but also on a reconciliation with the Holy See. It was Mary who against the advice of her councillors vindicated the memory of her disgraced Spanish mother by marrying Philip of Spain. For the first time English Protestants were brought fully face to face with their political ambivalence. Under Henry the eighth they had been able to bask in the sun of liberation from Rome and even in the prospect of a Protestant future. Mary's actions by contrast allowed little scope for self-deception. Her character was doctrinaire rather than devious. The Protestant subject at last encountered an ungodly ruler and his political life became a tussle between his constitutionalism and his idealism.

(1) Exile and Politicization

The first reactions of most English Protestants to this dilemma were ones of confusion or caution. Some writers referred to the 'violence of bloody laws' or even suggested that the political status, the 'names and titles' of bishops and other public officials were to be treated with scepticism, but candour of this kind was rare.¹ Writers like William Turner and John Olde assaulted the laws of the Catholic Church without clarifying their political significance - the fact that they were also the laws of England.² Similarly, Turner's attack on England's false prophets - prophets who had entered into the sheepfold unsent - ignored the political fact that this absence of a divine commission was compensated for by the possession of a Marian one.³

However, within a year - a year in which Mary continued to consolidate her Catholic gains - Turner had decided to venture into the sphere of political comment. But he did so not to proclaim the primacy of political godliness over ordinary civil loyalties. On the contrary, he reiterated the old constitutionalism of the Henrician exiles. Some writers indeed had already repeated the familiar theme of the duped but basically pure queen, whilst expressing some incredulity that she should allow herself to be deceived by 'such

1. Thomas Sampson, A letter to the true professors of Christ's gospel, 1554, B5; The humble and unfained confession of the belief of certain poor banished men, 1554, A5.

2. e.g. Turner, The hunting of the Romish wolf, op.cit., D2

3. Ibid.

weathercocks and doublefaced dreamers of mischief as Gardiner and Bonner'.⁴ What Turner did was to rise to an impassioned defence of Mary, her father and her mother against the arguments of a Catholic attack composed nearly twenty years previously. In his famous 'De Vera Obedientia Oratio' Stephen Gardiner had defended Henry the eighth's divorce of Catherine of Aragon - a divorce which had rendered the present queen illegitimate. Of course Protestants at the time had entirely concurred with this action, but in his enthusiasm to vindicate the queen Turner threw his consistency to the winds. 'Let us see what honestly he thinketh of our sovereign Lady Queen Mary and Queen Catherine her mother ?' he asked protectively and unctuously. In Gardiner's description Henry's marriage with Catherine of Aragon had become 'an unnatural whorish incestuous marriage' and the sum total had been to make 'the king a whoremaster, our Queen's mother a whore and our Queen a bastard'.⁵

Now few English Protestants, even in this period, ever felt less than a glow of satisfaction at the opportunity to indulge their traditional loyalties to the English monarchy. But, as in the Henrician period, Protestant constitutionalism had virtues other than those

4. Thomas Cotsford, Preface to translation of The account reckoning and faith of Ulrich Zwingli, Geneva, 1555, *8; Preface to translation of Stephen Gardiner, De Vera Obedientia, op. cit., A8-B1.

5. Turner, A new book of spiritual physic, op.cit., F4-5.

of sincerity; it was also tactically advantageous to Protestants. Turner was using Mary as a pawn to score points off the Catholics. The offence to Mary was no less important than the offender - the 'cook' Gardiner administering poisoned fare to the Queen and occupying a position of power as the 'Queen's high friend'.⁶

But Turner's defence of Mary was not necessarily cynical. Indeed, loyalist enthusiasm might easily lead to a temporary loss of memory about unpalatable facts like the queen's ungodliness.

But Turner's incentive to indulge this enthusiasm at this unfortunate time for Protestantism was a different matter. This at least must have sprung from tactical considerations - the need to defend Protestants from charges of treachery by demonstrating that they were better loyalists than Catholics. And once Turner decided to drop this defensive posture, he would surely begin to attack the queen in the way that his godly instincts demanded - instincts which were beginning to overwhelm the ordinary constitutionalism of Turner and other Protestants even in Edward's reign. This suggestion is more than hypothetical. In his 'Apology' of 1556 John Ponet produced opinions very similar to those of Turner. He depicted himself as a kind of chivalrous knight, protecting the 'chaste ears' of his 'virgin queen' from the 'whorish and ethnical talk' of his Catholic opponent, Thomas Martin. Like Turner, Ponet

6. Ibid.

expressed concern at the depiction of Henry the eighth as a 'lecher and heretic' and the discredit which this portrayal reflected upon the queen. Henry the eighth had been characterized by the Henrician exiles as a Protestant, but in identifying the Protestant cause with the English monarchy even this gross distortion was not sufficient for Ponet. Henry the eighth, in short, was a virtual martyr-king. In terms of Catholic logic it was proper that his body should be dug up and burnt at Windsor like Wyclif's. It was apparently of no interest to Ponet that the queen might sympathise with Martin's attacks upon Henry's shabby treatment of her mother. The English monarchy, even when in the possession of a doctrinaire Catholic like Mary, could not be allowed to escape the protective embrace of its Protestant subjects. 'All men of wisdom,' Ponet wrote, 'may well judge of thee that it had been thy part to have covered the fault of the Queen's father, if thou haddest any fault wherewith to charge him, lest the world perceive some unnaturalness in her, so to suffer her noble father now being dead to be railed upon....' Nor apparently would Mary spurn the Protestant embrace, or, if she did, it could only be because of some ancillary reason and not because her intentions were impure. Ponet, in fact, recited on Mary's behalf virtually the whole catalogue of extenuations invented by the Henrician exiles, Brinkelow and Bale. Either Mary had never read Martin's book, or had read it only with disapproval, or alternatively had

allowed it to be distributed only because of her ignorance of the nature of its contents.⁷

What was the meaning of this unctious and anxious attachment to the political order and to the queen in particular? Apparently the same as in Turner's case. For whatever the sincere exuberance of Ponet's 'flag-waving' in the 'Apology' it had now come to possess an intense fragility. In the same year as the 'Apology' Ponet produced his famous 'Short Treatise of Politic Power'. In this the chaste innocent of the 'Apology' was magically transformed into an idolatrous witch. It is probable that in some sections, particularly the long chapter dealing with the tyranny of despoiling subjects of their goods, Philip was as much the object of attack as Mary, but even here 'Dame Jezebel' made her entry as the prime-mover behind the scenes - the instigator of Ahab's robbery of Naboth. It should perhaps be noted that Ponet's attacks were still at one remove from the queen and his only direct reference to her depicted Mary as the 'friendless queen of England', 'enchanted' by 'savage Bonner'. But there could be little doubt as to the actual direction of Ponet's thrusts, even if throughout the treatise Mary bore the assumed names of Jezebel and Athalia. Biblical tyrants were simply convenient euphemisms for Mary herself. Athalia was a 'mad woman', a 'woman tyrant' capable of 'all abomination and cruelty', and the 'witch Jezebel', 'a woman

7. Ponet, An Apology, etc., op.cit., A6-8, L7, A8-B1.

full of malice and mischief'. For all its calculated indirectness, there was now no ambiguity in the message. Ponet was brilliantly and scathingly contemptuous of Mary's false pregnancy - of 'women who desirous of children procure the midwives to say they be with child when their belly is puffed up with the dropsy' and of the processions, Te Deums, bonfires and banquettings 'whilst another bird's egg is laid in the nest'. If Mary had in fact blushed at Martin's attack, she surely now had equal reason to do so at Ponet's.⁸

Thus in the course of a single year Ponet produced two works about Mary Tudor, the one protecting and praising her, the other vilifying her. Turner, on the other hand, failed to make a similar volte-face, but already there was much to suggest that his ideology might have eventually evolved in this direction. Both his works in exile, as we shall see, were overwhelmingly dedicated to the creation of an activist nobility prepared to slay idolaters or drive them out of the country. Turner's Protestant nobility would have eventually come into conflict with an unconverted queen, but the absence of a real revolutionary situation throughout the reign enabled him to evade the issue. Ponet on the other hand provided an actual and a classic example of the easy volatility of Protestant political statements in the new reign and of the fragility of apparently innocuous declarations of loyalty. In no other writer

8. Ponet, *A short treatise, etc.*, op.cit., pp.115, 88, 67, 55-6.

did a fabric of subservience collapse so quickly or so dramatically. The problem of charting shifts in attitude is complicated by the fact that in the case of all but a few writers our record is confined to one or two surviving tracts, partly, no doubt, because of Mary's destruction of books and because the disappointing resilience of her regime was no incentive to launch a constant ideological barrage to the country. However, in some writers like Robert Pownall, who wrote four tracts between 1554 and 1557, an increasing boldness of approach can be detected. For a time Pownall confined himself to sporadic and vague references to the reign of hypocrites and the need to distrust kings and princes.⁹ He refused to incorporate the queen in what was nevertheless an incipiently revolutionary thought in its denunciation of papists and demands for a new English Jerusalem.¹⁰ But in 1557, possibly through increasing frustration, possibly through the inspiration of Ponet's 'Short Treatise', Pownall discarded his former delicacy and caution. 'Instead of the gospel,' he wrote, 'he hath sent you papistry ... and instead of a most Christian king a most wicked and idolatrous queen. A very Jezebel, that is friend to Baal and his priests, and an utter enemy to God and His people. Yea, another Athalia,

9. Pownall, Preface to translation of Wolfgang Musculus, *The Temporizer*, op.cit., A3.

10. Pownall, *A most fruitful prayer for the dispersed Church of Christ*, 1554?, in the *Writings of John Bradford*, Vol.1, Ed. A. Townsend, Parker Society, Cambridge, 1848, pp. 578-81.

that is an utter destroyer of her own kindred, kingdom and country.¹¹

The attachment to godly rule which had emerged amongst Protestant idealists in the 1540s was bound to place in jeopardy the sacred barriers of the political order under the new regime - a regime which was responsible for the Protestant's two main sources of social discontent - popery and Spain, but only if circumstances really inspired this. Despite constant flurries of turbulence throughout the reign, opposition in the country never reached such a pitch as to encourage more than a group of ideological leaders to attack the regime. The despair of the Protestant activist and what this meant in terms of his reactions to the political order is well illustrated by a late work of Bartholomew Traheron. As we shall see, Traheron would almost certainly have supported a movement of armed resistance in the country, but he regarded the immediate prospect of this as virtually hopeless. In the circumstances, he desperately turned to the queen, attempting in a violent and last-ditch effort to shock her into Protestantism. Of course, no Edwardian prophet would have excluded the theoretical possibility of a violent verbal assault on his monarch. Such an assault, on the other hand, would have tended to extend beyond the reach of his imagination. Traheron, however, now determined to depict Mary for herself in all her grossness, describing her 'raging

11. Pownall, *An Admonition, etc.*, op.cit., p.2.

madness', her 'filthiness' and her 'beastly abomination'. 'She is despicable, cruel, bloody, wilful, furious, guileful, stuffed with painted processes, with simulation and dissimulation, void of honesty, void of upright dealing, void of all seemly virtues,' he wrote. But the credibility of Mary's power could not be undermined to the extent Ponet and Pownall had attempted, for this monster was to be no less than the future architect of Protestant reform. 'I speak not this of hatred,' Traheron continued, 'nor for any lust to recount other loathsome evils, but to call her to speedy repentance by the ugly sight of her most horrible sins.'¹² It was a sad testimony to the political and strategic nakedness of English Protestantism. But Traheron, and several others, had at least broken the barriers of previously forbidden territory, if only to find that circumstances did not invite further progress.

(2) The New Face of Protestant Politics:
The English Approach

A number of important English Protestants thus began to acquire a new perspective on the political world in the course of their exile. These Protestants shared a common social embitterment and social and political legacy with other Protestant radicals. The rapidity of their transition away from their natural instincts of political loyalism is a clear implication that if the exile had lasted much longer, the same ideas would have been given expression, or at least applauded by many others. But to what extent can we speak of a uniformity of approach

12. Traheron, A Warning, etc., op.cit., A2, B5, A5.

amongst those exiles who made a radical attack upon the political order ? In this section I shall suggest the existence of a distinctive English approach.

Though Protestants like Ponet and Pownall were ready to fling around stylizations like Jezebel in their political rhetoric, it is important to note that their own and others' critique of the political order represented not merely the collision but also the tenuous reconciliation of deeply-embedded cultures of idealism and traditionalism. The politicized Protestant exile adapted rather than rejected his constitutionalism. He attacked Marian laws as violations not merely of the laws of God, but also of the laws of England. This idea - that England's positive laws were beyond repeal - was an important element in the constitutional thought of sixteenth century England, and it was fully reflected in the arguments of the English exiles. John Bale's work, for instance, represented a tension between the conviction that all arguments except those based on Scripture were valueless and a reluctance to let the solid ground of English reformed tradition slip away from under his feet. Bale was contemptuous of the fact that Edmund Bonner based his administration of the see of London not on Moses or Christ or the Apostles, but on 'ancient usage and old father custom'. But he then proceeded to demonstrate with considerable pride the antiquity of Protestant institutions. Protestants could take encouragement from the 'ancient order' and 'good ordinances' of Alfred, Athelstan, Edgar, Canute, Edward and numerous other English kings. Catholic

claims were impudent, for custom and continuity belonged to the Protestant cause.¹³ Like Bale, John Olde complained with especial bitterness of the violation of the 'common authority' established by Edward the sixth in his Church - the subversion of Edward's 'order, form, use of preaching, prayer and administration of the holy sacraments' by ministers of Antichrist.¹⁴ It was somewhat curious that in the time of an ungodly regime Protestants should have been able to retain their traditional faith in England's laws as an instrument of radical endeavour. But it was a significant weapon - significant because without it many English Protestants would have been far less confident about justifying, to others and to themselves, their revulsion for the new regime. Protestant legalism tended to imply that only one link in the long chain of tradition had been broken. The Marian regime was an unfortunate and exceptional perversion in a long and honourable heritage - a heritage which a few writers like Bale could trace far back into the murky depths of English history.

It must be emphasized, however, that the basic attachment of most radical Protestants was only to a particular portion of the past - the system of Edward the sixth. And when they came to describe this system, they spoke of it in fact more often in religious categories

13. Bale, A declaration of Edmund Bonner's Articles, op. cit., N4, L5.

14. John Olde, The Acquittal or Purgation of the most Catholic Christian prince Edward the sixth, Emden, 1555, A2.

than in terms of its common order and legality. Protestants - and Olde whom I mentioned above is an example of this - might speak respectfully of Henry the eighth (though few bothered to mention him at all), but with no less than reverence with regard to Edward the sixth. Olde spoke enthusiastically of Edward's 'common authority', but he also brought other more abstract standards to his service. No other epoch of English history invited a devotion equal to that of Edward's reign, for this was the reign when English law had been made to conform most completely with God's true religion. Edward's Church, in short, had been a covenanted Church. 'These tables,' wrote Olde, 'that were written with the finger of God and proclaimed beforehand with God's own hand in that great Church at the Mount Sinai, we keep entire, perfect and uncorrupt - we take away nothing, we alter nothing, we put to nothing, we leave out nothing, we thrust in nothing contrary to God's mind, we change nothing at all.'¹⁵ The Edwardian Church was not merely a legal Church; the most total religious claims could be made for it. John Ponet, like Olde, continued to regard the order which Mary had destroyed with complete religious devotion. England's king had been a 'godly Josiah' and his preachers 'the prophets of God'. 'Leave your idolatry,' Ponet told Englishmen, 'and know and worship God truly as ye were taught in blessed king Edward's time ...'¹⁶

15. Ibid, C1-2

16. Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., pp.149, 181.

All this amounted to a perpetuation of the Edwardian political myth into Mary's reign. The radical Protestant retained his constitutional faith in Edward's laws; he criticised Mary's laws because they violated the true English constitution. He criticised them also because they were ungodly: they violated his new-found elation and experience in godly rule. Elation and experience - an important combination, for godly rule was not just something biblically extracted: it had been located and institutionalized in a specific English past - the Edwardian past. And therefore Protestants who had urged the further reform of English rule in accordance with godly standards could never do so with quite the same freedom as their Scottish counterparts. The Englishman sensed the wisdom of full commitment to a semi-godly regime, the Scot only his total opposition to an ungodly regime. Because of this the English Protestant's traditionalist instincts, his faith in an English continuum - a continuum which only Mary had violated - was deepened. This fact was clearly reflected in the nature of his attack on Mary's rule.

Mary had risen to power in England as a result of a specific law of succession established by Henry the eighth. But the Protestant's knowledge of godly rule suggested that only monarchs with authority from God were entitled to succeed. Surely Mary, always a papist, always a child of Spain, should never have been raised to power in the first place. John Ponet, for one, obviously appreciated this argument. Hosea's words -

'They have made them a king and not through me, a prince and not through my council and will' - proved that succession procedures should always be ratifications of God's will. And in cases where they were not intentionally so, God was even capable of reversing his initial ordinance. For instance, Saul, God's ordinance as king, had been selected by the people without God's counsel. Therefore, Ponet explained, 'because he was not chosen according to the will of God, but according to the minds and deserts of the sinful people, God denied him to be ordained by his will or counsel'. At this point Ponet's discussion of the matter ended. He had obviously mentioned it because of its contemporary political relevance, but he was equally unwilling to make it the focal point of his attack on Mary. Elsewhere he stated that Mary had succeeded to the throne by due right of succession. If she now lacked authority to rule it could therefore only be because of her subsequent tyranny.¹⁷ And in attacking Mary, another English exile - Robert Pownall - made it clear that his opposition was only to a particular sovereign, not to the general laws of succession. 'Neither art thou subject to this queen,' he wrote, 'as for her sake to withdraw for ever thy subjection from the crown of England and the rightful inheritors of the same.'¹⁸

17. Ibid, pp.42, 104, 68-9.

18. Pownall, An Admonition, etc., op.cit., p.15

The politicized Protestant attacked Mary's laws as ungodly and Mary herself as a tyrant. But his attachment to England's past tended to preclude a more revolutionary approach to politics. For more than twenty years the bulk of his experience had tended to convince him of the good sense and godliness of England's laws and monarchs, and he continued to live with this myth in exile. It was a myth that hopefully might soon be revitalized under Elizabeth. There was therefore little inclination to seek cast-iron guarantees of godly rule, no question of making every future ruler campaign for a mandate on the manifesto of his own godliness. The political life of the English Protestant remained as ever a compromise - a balance between tradition and godliness. It was a compromise nevertheless that exposed in all its starkness the tyranny of Mary Tudor.

(3) Genevan Revolutionism - Calvinist or Scottish?

In his 'Revolution of the Saints' Michael Walzer suggests that the outlook of the exiles at Strasburg and the centres other than Geneva was essentially legalistic. Their ecclesiastical attachments were entirely Edwardian, their faith simply the 'good order' and laws of the English Church, and their imagined status still that of public officers of the dead king. This is not merely a half-truth, but surely the less important half of the truth. The non-Genevan exiles were now prophets rather than public officers, and, as we have seen, they brought to the political order the same godly perspectives that

they brought to the rest of society. But if, according to Walzer, the non-Genevans were legalists, there was apparently no dearth of godly idealism at Geneva. The Genevans, we are told, were political revolutionaries. They occupied a kind of neo-Manichean universe characterized by the starkest dualisms - dualisms which called into question not merely the social environment but also the whole structure of English political life. 'God's prophet fastened his narrowly religious purpose upon the secular and political world. He proposed to call all rights of succession, all established law and custom, all dynastic, national, or even class loyalties - valueless.'¹⁹ At this point suspicion might be aroused that Walzer's model is more allegorical than historical, that the Genevan and non-Genevan exiles are simply convenient embodiments of the idealistic and legalistic components in the Protestant political consciousness. But in fact a significant political divergence did occur at Geneva. This is curious, for up to this point, both before and during the exile, the English Protestant radicals had spoken with a virtually unanimous voice. They all possessed an anxious preoccupation with the sin in society. They all tended to hope for a social catharsis in the future. At Geneva, though, this social paranoia exploded not just into an attack upon the present regime, but into an assault upon the fundamental structure

19. Walzer, op.cit., p.103.

and organization of the political order. This could hardly have been a direct result of revolutionary instruction from Calvin. Walzer himself admits Calvin's political caution, his deference to established authorities, his perennial fear of political chaos.²⁰ Yet Genevan politics were apparently Calvinist politics. In fact, they could only have been Calvinist in terms of the social perspectives which gave them their underlying momentum - perspectives which were shared by the many radicals and semi-Calvinists elsewhere. Genevan politics, in short, were less Calvinist than Knoxian.

As we have seen, it was some time before the English Protestant's instincts for godly rule were able to clear themselves through the fog of his traditional political loyalties. By contrast, Knox's record of religious oppositionism, his involvement in the centrifugal politics of Scotland, his unique sense of personal mission, resulted in a less ambiguous attitude to politics - a kind of instinctive irreverence. Within a few months of exile he had entered the political arena and not surprisingly to an extent unparalleled by any English exile at this time. He emphasized the fallibility of civil laws and the need for their subordination before the word of God.²¹ And he vilified and insulted the queen in a way that no English Protestant, even by the end of the exile, ever quite matched. Already one or two English exiles

20. Ibid, pp. 57-9.

21. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.3, pp. 236, 312-3.

were referring disparagingly to 'Jezebel',²² but Knox's political candour assigned little place to euphemisms. He launched a specific and frontal assault on the queen. 'I find that Athalia through appetite to reign, murdered the seed of the kings of Judah,' he wrote, '... but that ever a woman that suffered herself to be called the most blessed Virgin caused so much blood to be shed for establishing of a usurped authority, I think is rare to be found in Scripture or history ... But you Papists will excuse Mary the Virgin; well let her be your Virgin ... Speak now, O ye Papists! and defend your monstrous mistress, and deny if ye can for shame that she hath not suffered herself to be born (alas therefore!) to the ruin and destruction of noble England.' And so the tirade - and these are only excerpts from it - continued. 'Mischievous Mary' had erected twice as many gallows in London alone as Jezebel, 'that cursed idolatress', in the whole of Israel.²³

But already Knox's political restlessness was leading him into even deeper waters. Because Mary's authority was so completely intolerable, it had to be proved to be invalid - for the benefit of others and for the benefit of Knox himself. For nearly everything that he

22. Becon, A humble supplication, etc., op.cit., A7; The epistle of a banished man out of Leicestershire, Emden, 1554, in Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.3, p.261. It has recently been suggested that this is not the work of Antony Gilby, as previously thought, but of the notable Scottish reformer John Willock, who was in exile at Emden. (Duncan Shaw, The General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1964, p.32.)

23. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.3, pp. 294-6.

had heard in England and from continental theologians suggested that royal power was sacred in origin and sacred in operation. The situation was an intolerable one for Knox. The validity of his strongest political instincts was denied by Protestant orthodoxy. He therefore began to look for political reassurance and he sought it mainly in the sphere of sexual politics. Early in 1554 he asked Bullinger 'Whether a female can preside over and rule a kingdom by divine right'.²⁴ And this was to become the central theme of his first systematic revolutionary tract - 'The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women'. But why should Knox have attempted to turn Protestant politics into a women's suppression movement? I shall try to show that Knox's peculiarity lay not so much in his acceptance of the arguments of sexual politics. It lay rather in his willingness to exploit these arguments in view of their revolutionary implications.

It was obvious to a considerable number of exiles apart from Knox that in biblical terms Mary was politically vulnerable because of her womanhood. Though several biblical narratives suggested that God had withdrawn his support from particular rulers, it was extremely difficult to extract from the Bible evidence that any type or category of rulers automatically lacked divine sanction for their position. Such evidence, however, was available in the case of woman rulers. Dicta like that of the

24. Ibid, p.222.

Apostle - 'I suffer not a woman to teach neither yet to usurp authority above man' - and Samuel's stipulation that only the brethren of a people should be their rulers seemed to establish a general principle about women in politics. It would, therefore, have been rather surprising if the non-Genevan exiles who attacked the queen had ignored the sexual approach. There could have been little doubt in the minds of his readers that John Ponet was implying a general principle when he concluded a violent attack on Jezebel and then on Athalia with the words: 'All the misery in the realm of Naples came by a woman ...',²⁵ An exile at Zurich was even more direct about the matter. In the course of a sustained attack on the queen he asked 'Whether the express word of God in the twenty second chapter of Deuteronomy forbid a woman to bear a sword or wear spurs, as kings do in their creation, or apparel of man, saying: A woman shall not wear the weapons of a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's raiment, for who so doth it is abomination unto the Lord God.'²⁶ Equally striking was a statement made by Thomas Becon within a few months of the start of exile. 'In the stead of that virtuous prince,' he wrote, 'thou has set to rule over us a woman, whom nature hath formed to be in subjection unto man, and who thou by thy holy Apostle commanded to keep silence and not speak in the congregation. Ah Lord to take away the empire from a man

25. Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., p.65-6(my italics)

26. Certain Questions, etc., op.cit., A3.

and to give it unto a woman seemeth to be an evident token of thy anger toward us Englishmen. For by the prophets thou being displeased with thy people, threatened to set women to rule over them, as people unworthy to have lawful, natural and meet governors to reign over them.²⁷ This statement contained most of the elements of Knox's own argument. It contained the biblical argument and also the empirical argument from nature. But one aspect of Knox's argument was missing, for Becon apparently believed that Mary's rule carried the protective cloak of divine sanction. Her reign was a penalty on the English people for their sins. Knox, by contrast, clearly stated in his 'First Blast' that the initial promotion of a woman to rule was a contravention of God's 'revealed will and approved ordinance', and that women were debarred from normal rights of political inheritance. Becon also regarded Mary's rule as a clear aberration from the norm, from what was 'natural' and 'lawful', much in the same way as Protestants including Knox could regard Elizabeth's reign as a providential exception to what was right and proper. Only one link in the chain, therefore, had to be broken. If Mary's rule was perverted and unlawful, it only remained for Becon to persuade himself that God had ceased to violate the ordinary processes of his own law and that Mary's authority was hence usurped.

It was precisely this position that Protestants like Becon were unwilling to assume. They never allowed the

27. Becon, A humble supplication, etc., op.cit., A7.

sexual argument too much prominence. They tended to evade its underlying implications - revolutionary implications. But it could be argued that far more ordinary factors were at work. For instance, certain elements in Knox's record imply the possibility of retarded sexuality. The intimacy of his relationships with middle-aged women like Mrs. Elizabeth Bowes and Mrs. Anne Locke suggests the continued enactment in maturity of mother-son relationships. Mrs. Bowes in particular, with her constant and neurotic need for religious consolation, may have provided Knox with the perfect gratification which his urge to masculine dominance demanded. Mary Tudor not merely spurned this dominance; she even rejected Knox to the point of sending him into the foster-home of exile - a rejection which may have induced in him a child-like anger and resentment.²⁸ It should also be remembered that Knox was troubled more than any other Protestant of his time by women in authority. His problems included not merely the 'cursed Jezebel' - Mary Tudor, but also the 'crafty Dame' - Mary of Guise. And no sooner had these monsters disappeared from the scene than another appeared in the shape of Mary, Queen of Scots.

This apart, sexual politics was not merely useful to all the exiles from Mary's tyranny; it also, as we have seen, carried a possibly unique intellectual power. The possible future accession of Elizabeth only accentuated

28. See Edwin Muir, *John Knox; portrait of a Calvinist*, London, 1929, concerning the possible nature of Knox's relationship with Mrs. Bowes.

amongst the English exiles a basic distrust for its revolutionary implications. These were quite simply that Mary Tudor should never have succeeded to the English throne, and indeed even that the only sanction of all political authority was political godliness. The bulk of English Protestants seem to have opposed Northumberland's attempt before Mary's accession to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne. They distrusted Northumberland, but, even more, the plot offended their sense of legitimacy, their sense of tradition and continuity - a continuity which found its symbol in the Tudor line. Knox, confronted in Scotland with Catholic laws and Catholic authorities, laws and authorities which in any case lacked the secular power of their English counterparts, created a new legitimacy - a legitimacy which focussed itself chiefly on himself and his own interpretation of the word of God. He was therefore far more likely to seek to institutionalize godly rule, to insulate it from the accidents of heredity. Already in 1554 he was referring to Mary's government as a 'usurped' government and later in the exile he made the principle transparently clear. It amounted to a head-on clash with the English and Scottish political traditions. 'The consent, say they,' he wrote, 'of realms and laws pronounced and admitted in this behalf, long consuetude and custom, together with the felicity of some women in their empires, have established their authority. To whom I answer that neither may the tyranny of princes, neither the foolishness

of people, neither wicked laws made against God, neither yet the felicity that in this earth may hereof ensue, make that thing lawful which He by his Word hath manifestly condemned.'²⁹ For Knox all ordinary political realities could be submitted to a simple doctrinaire revolutionary logic.

This was essentially a Scottish logic arising out of Knox's Scottish experience. Our problem with the Genevans really begins with the English Genevans, and particularly with Christopher Goodman. For Goodman apparently did no less than to pitch England's laws of succession into the rubbish bin of history. 'I know ye will say,' he wrote, 'the crown is not entailed to the heirs male only but appertaineth as well to the daughters: and therefore by the laws of the realm you could not otherwise do. But if it be so, yet miserable is this answer of such as had so long time professed the Gospel and the lively Word of God ... The constant and undoubted law of God ... ought to be the line of all ordinances ...' Only one criterion entered Goodman's range of options. Or did it? Goodman's treatment of law was far more specific than Knox's: it was a confrontation not merely with laws, but with the laws of England. And if the apologist of constitutionalism could only provide a 'miserable' answer it may well have reflected not the obviousness of the issue involved, but the catharsis of an intellectual break-through, the

29. Knox, Works, op.cit., p.413.

dramatic defeat of one protagonist after a mighty tussle in Goodman's own mind. If the law of God was Goodman's only sign-post, why should he have been so concerned to convince others and probably himself of the ordinary legal obviousness of his position ?

'If women,' he wrote, 'be not permitted by civil policies to rule in inferior offices, to be counsellors, peers of a realm, justices, sheriffs, bailiffs, and such like, I make yourselves judges whether it be meet for them to govern the whole realms and nations ?'

Goodman, it is true, displayed a certain doctrinaire radicalism in following out the logic of his attitudes so that Elizabeth found herself included in the general prohibition. 'Be that she were no bastard,' he wrote, 'but the king's daughter as lawfully begotten as was her sister, that godly lady and meek lamb, void of all Spanish pride, and strange blood, yet in the sickness and at the death of our lawful prince of godly memory, King Edward the sixth, this should not have been your first council or question - who should be your queen, what woman you should crown ...' But the whole argument was deflated by Goodman's unctuous praise of the future queen. And faced with the actual accession of his 'godly lady' a few months later, he of course raised no protest. In his tract he stated that if Mary, even after the burning of three hundred martyrs, would confess Christ and expel the papists, 'then were she...

to be born with and revered as a ruler'. Goodman added the proviso 'if it were lawful for a woman to rule at all', but here again the principle was in hurried retreat before the situation.³⁰

In fact the heads of the English exiles at Geneva were not totally immersed in Walzerian clouds; they also had their feet firmly planted on the solid ground of English law and tradition. In this their stance was entirely similar to that of the non-Genevan exiles, whose ideas we looked at in the last section. Mr. Walzer claims that the religious catharsis of exile and the revolutionary purism of Calvinism liberated the Genevan exiles from their English bondage. 'There is hardly a word in their letters or tracts to suggest nostalgia or sorrow for England,' he writes.³¹ Yet consider these words of Christopher Goodman: 'Godly king Edward the sixth, your late prince and governor, and the zealous servant of God ... sought to rule you in God's fear ... You had the comfortable word of God and were delivered from the Romish Antichrist and from all superstition, having your realm free from strangers and quiet from all enemies, enjoying your goods and friends in peace without all force.'³² And what of Antony Gilby, the third of the grand trio of Genevan literati. 'I desire you to call to remembrance your best state under king Edward,' he

30. Goodman, op.cit., pp. 54-4, 52, 53-4, 131.

31. Walzer, op.cit., p.97.

32. Goodman, op.cit., pp.175-6.

wrote.³³ Nor was it merely the godliness of the past that attracted these exiles; it was also its ordinary legality, its part in what they liked to view as a continuing English tradition. Christopher Goodman emphasized the Word of God, but he clearly regarded Marian enactments as more than simple violations of God's law. 'You have yet your own laws amongst you,' he wrote, 'that is the law of God and of your realm, if you would use them, by which you have had all peace and quietness.'³⁴ An anonymous translator of a tract of Calvin was equally anxious to invest English law with its own autonomous force, and to prove that Mary's actions were illegal in the ordinary English sense of the term. 'The common prayer commanded by public authority', he wrote, 'set forth after St. Paul's rules to the edifying of Christ's congregation in the vulgar tongue, was against God's law and also against the laws of the realm banished ...'³⁵ As in the case of the English exiles elsewhere the political life of the English Genevans and Calvinists clearly balanced idealism with traditionalism. Examples could be multiplied of Goodman's reliance on a dual formula of approach - 'God's laws and man's,' the 'laws of God and public peace'.³⁶ Appeals of this kind made little sense to Knox's Scottish logic. He regarded exiles more

33. Gilby, *An Admonition, etc.*, op.cit., in Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.4, p.564.

34. Goodman, op.cit., p.129 (my italics).

35. Translator's preface to Certain homilies of M. John Calvin, 1553, A2(my italics).

36. Goodman, op.cit., pp. 35, 99, 195, 198.

as an opportunity to scrutinize than to lament the loss of the old religious practice. It was Knox who took the lead in Prayer Book revision at Frankfurt. It was Knox who ridiculed the fact that everything had been justified in Edward's reign by the magic legalistic formula of the 'King's Proceedings'.³⁷ All political phenomena were to be submitted to simple scrutiny before the divine law. Writing to Elizabeth in 1559, Knox reminded her of the bankruptcy of tradition and all other criteria: 'neither the consent of people, process of time, nor multitude of men can establish a law which God shall approve ... It appertaineth to you therefore to ground the justice of your authority not upon that law which from year to year doth change, but upon eternal providence'.³⁸

There can be little doubt that as its minister Knox exerted a charismatic power over the English congregation at Geneva and led it in certain directions that its normal English instincts were incapable of. After 1556 he began to communicate his own mounting sense of excitement at the rising tide of Protestant rebellion in Scotland. And the apparently imminent advent of religious purity in Scotland inevitably quickened the anxiety of English Genevans about England's religious future. By the summer of 1558 Antony Gilby had worked

37. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.5, p.515.

38. Ibid, Vol.6, pp. 49 - 50.

himself into a state of paranoia about the crisis of British Protestantism. Scotland lived in hope, but England's only hope was immediate and total repentance. It was therefore a time for complete honesty about the past, even the political past. He referred to Henry the eighth as a 'tyrant and lecherous monster', as a 'monstrous boar'.³⁹ Ten years earlier he had unctuously praised Henry for 'most christianly' suppressing the superstition of the abbeys.⁴⁰ John Ponet had swivelled on a similar axis of praise and vilification with regard to Mary Tudor, but with Gilby godliness was beginning to make a sharper, less discriminating incision into the political world. But it was a moment of exceptional stress - essentially Scottish stress. And even so, as we saw, it was still a moment that inspired Gilby to political protection of the Edwardian order. Similarly, it was probably Knox and Scotland that began to direct Goodman's thought into revolutionary channels. Goodman's tract may or may not have been an attempt to do for England what Knox was doing for Scotland. Knox probably unleashed an animated debate on monarchy at Geneva, but Protestants elsewhere preceded Goodman in attacking Mary's authority. Knox's debate, though, must have revolved around Knox's arguments and his interest in

39. Gilby, *An Admonition, etc.*, op.cit., in Knox, *Works*, op.cit., Vol.4, p.563.

40. Gilby, *An answer to the devilish detection of Stephen Gardiner*, op.cit., B4.

sexual politics and the intellectual power of this theme must have made it something of an article of political faith at Geneva.

In 1567, though, Goodman decided to renounce his objections to female government in order to return to England and an ecclesiastical living under Elizabeth. And of course Knox's political idealism also tended to be moderated by circumstances. He conformed himself to the defensive, feudal politics of the Congregation, never incriminating himself or it by assaulting the womanhood of Mary of Guise. And though he continued, especially in the period before his return to Scotland to attack idolatrous rulers, there was little suggestion that idolatry implied an actual forfeiture of political authority.⁴¹ Even less was there the suggestion that idolaters were initially debarred from succession. His first specific public denial of Mary of Guise's authority echoed the traditionalist, secular, anti-French mood of the country: Mary had forfeited her authority by offences against the commonwealth.⁴² Knox then accepted the accession of Mary, Queen of Scots, though theoretically her accession should have been debarred, except in the unlikely event that she was a providential and exceptional 'Deborah'. Political idealism bowed to political prudence. But for all its impractical

41. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.4, pp.431-538, Vol.1, p.269 ff.

42. Ibid, Vol.1, p.443.

neatness Knox's political revolutionism was an important force: it represented an immense yearning to guarantee godly rule. It was no surprise when in 1564, in the wake of an almost uncontrollable impatience, Knox eventually launched a massive attack on the authority of Mary, Queen of Scots.

In the next chapter we shall look at the theories of resistance and even of regicide to which this political oppositionism gave rise. But first it has been important to establish what exactly the exiles were opposing and why. Knox obviously opposed Mary Tudor because she deeply and immediately offended his expectations of godly rule, expectations which can only be described as a kind of revolutionary purism. This feeling was slower to emerge amongst the more deferential English exiles and when it did so it took a rather less revolutionary form. Mary had violated not merely godly rule, but also English tradition and the English tradition of godly rule. These separate approaches with their common, vital ingredient of political godliness were far more similar than they were different, but it seems clear that we can speak of a Scottish rejection and an English rejection of the Marian regime of the 1550s. And in the case of the ideologies of resistance and regicide to which this opposition gave rise, we shall have to speak, at least as far as the English exiles are concerned, of initiatives to political rebellion rather than political revolution.

(4) Secular and Sacred Approaches

Thus an increasing number of Protestants came during the course of the exile to the conclusion that the Marian regime lacked authority and that Mary herself could now be treated as a private rather than as a public person. But the revulsion of Protestants for the regime was twofold - religious and patriotic: Mary stood indicted as an idolater and as a traitor. Throughout the exile Protestants displayed a considerable sensitivity to public opinion in England. And it was the charge of treason rather than idolatry that really registered with this opinion. The record of the actual rebellions and conspiracies against Mary - Wyatt's rebellion, the Dudley Conspiracy, the farcical Stafford invasion of 1557 - shows that they were only lightly tinged with Protestantism. The element of anti-Spanish chauvinism on the other hand was considerable. Some politically astute Protestants, realizing this, allowed their Protestant ardour to be virtually submerged beneath their exploitation of xenophobia. John Ponet concentrated a great deal of anger on tyranny in his 'Short Treatise of Politic Power', but not much on religious tyranny. He was mainly concerned with the tyranny of murder, oppression and theft, and devoted long passages to the property rights of private subjects.⁴³ Englishmen had been concerned that the restoration of papal power might lead to their

43. Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., e.g. pp.79-97.

loss of appropriated monastic lands, but now in 1556 Ponet was more interested in exploiting Protestant fears concerning personal forfeiture and particularly the scarcely-subsided panic about Spanish ambitions on English property. In these ambitions Ponet entirely implicated Mary. Though he often referred to the queen in terms of biblical tyrants such as Jezebel and Athalia, he usually did so in the context of their violation of secular rights rather than religious purity. 'Dame Jezebel' had been the force behind the Spanish 'Ahab' when he robbed Naboth of his vineyard. Athalia had attempted to destroy the commonwealth by transferring the crown to a stranger.⁴⁴ This approach was characteristic of other secular politicians amongst the English exiles. Typical amongst the 'certain questions' asked by one Protestant was the following: 'forasmuch as the safety of the realm toucheth the lords and commons of the same, and all their lands, goods and possessions, whether may a queen marry to such a one, though she promise never so fair, as may by any means endanger the realm and proper possessions.'⁴⁵ The queen was also subjected to the organic comparisons which had formed so prominent a part of recent secular social analysis. Mary was like a deformed head in the body politic. Alternatively, England was like a body with two heads instead of one.⁴⁶

44. Ibid, pp.88, 114-5.

45. Certain Questions, op.cit., A5.

46. Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., pp.150-3.

After England's involvement by Spain in war with France in 1557 the balance of Protestant opposition to the queen tended to change. The failure of the war to provide the regime with any serious embarrassment - serious that is to anything like the extent of the Wyatt rebellion - was a severe blow to Protestant political ambitions. It was now time to expose Mary in her religious perversion - her chief crime - as much as in her treachery. Hopefully, if the message was shouted loudly enough, it might register with the English electorate. Robert Pownall persistently compared contemporary England with Israel under Jezebel: it was a time of national betrayal but even more of religious sickness - a sickness emanating from the queen.⁴⁷ Christopher Goodman claimed that Mary bore responsibility for the recent wars and the whole reception of the 'impudent nation' of Spain, but his central emphasis was on Mary's idolatry.⁴⁸ This was not a special quirk resulting from contact with Geneva. In 1554, after Wyatt's rebellion had revealed the strength of national discontentment, Knox's attacks on the queen's treachery had been as prominent as his attacks on her idolatry. Mary had been 'born ... to the ruin and destruction of noble England'; she was an 'open traitress to the

47. Pownall, *An Admonition, etc.*, op.cit., pp.2-6.

48. Goodman, op. cit., pp.178, 211, 129, 130, 136, 143, 57.

Imperial Crown of England'. 'Who seeth not now,' he asked, 'that under an English name she beareth a Spaniard's heart.'⁴⁹ But by 1557 when England had learnt to live with its Spanish inconvenience there was less incentive for Protestants to strain and exaggerate their nationalism. Of course a few writers continued to hammer home the old secular message, though in a slightly more frantic form. The author of the 'Lamentation of England', who in 1556 had meticulously catalogued the queen's treachery, complaining that she took the 'most part of her blood and stomach off her Spanish mother', in a postscript of 1558 claimed that she had deliberately weakened the country's defences to allow a conquest by Spain. Such a conquest was now her only concern.⁵⁰ This continuing obsession with the Spanish issue did not make the writer any the less a Protestant. His work, if mainly anti-Spanish, was interspersed with frequent interludes of abrasive Protestantism: Mary was a traitor to her country, but in slaying the prophets of God she was also as cursed and wicked as Jezebel.⁵¹ The new circumstances were hardly such as to invite political adaptability or even political initiatives at all. Goodman, speaking for the first time, could afford to jettison an approach which had been proved bankrupt, but in all probability the Protestant politician still had as much, or rather as little to gain from adopting a secular as from adopting a sacred stance.

49. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.3, pp.294-6.

50. The Lamentation of England, op.cit., A3, A5, A7-8, postscript (unpag.).

51. Ibid, B1.

Chapter 6 Regicide - Conceived and Aborted

Thus during the course of the exile a significant number of Protestants underwent a new politicization. As far as England was concerned, the political scales were reversed: the old political loyalism crumbled and a new assault on the political order took its place. In Knox's case political antagonisms became intellectually clarified and old reservations disappeared. Amongst this group rebellion and even regicide began to seem a plausible and natural solution to problems. The constitutional crusade disappeared, but the crusade still remained, its political direction now reversed. Ideologies of rebellion, it is true, remained restricted to a comparatively small group of exiles. But the potentiality embraced a much wider group. This can be inferred from the various forms of action which the exiles began to demand or to adopt - forms of action which we must now examine.

(1) Suffering Soldiers

With Mary's accession in 1553 Protestants lost their social status and their religion social recognition. The most vibrant architects of Edward's Reform departed to exile or even found themselves candidates for martyrdom. In these circumstances, as we have seen, some Protestants

began to think that the problem with society was its problems, and to concentrate their attention on heavenly rewards rather than on social gains.¹

The language of some Protestants suggested that they had come to regard suffering and affliction as norms of Christian existence and the only option remaining to Protestants. 'We are ordained to be afflicted,' was Robert Pownall's message in 1556. The prophet - in the Edwardian period a heroic figure, an instructor of princes - had now become a plaything of his religious enemies.

'Did they persecute some of the prophets,' continued Pownall, 'and left other some unafflicted? No. They have universally persecuted them all without exception.'²

Another Protestant made it equally clear that the prophet was ultimately a martyr rather than a social activist:

'To what end I pray you came all the prophets of God?

Some of them were stoned to death, some sawn in two with a wooden saw, some had tent nails driven through both their temples.'³

In Pownall's work of 1556 the Christian ceased to be God's 'instrument' working on the world: persecution was now the 'profitable Instrument' which acted on the Christian and made for his purification.⁴

But within a year Pownall, now suddenly in a mood of social desperation, suggested to his English audience

1. See above Chapter 4.

2. Pownall (trans.), A most pithy and excellent epistle, etc., op.cit., C8, C4.

3. Gracious Menewe, Pseud?, A confutation of popish and antichristian doctrine, 1555, F7.

4. Pownall, Preface to A most pithy and excellent epistle, etc., A3.

that they consider a movement of armed resistance against the queen. And it is precisely this violent oscillation of strategic perspectives that the build-up to this chapter has suggested. The Marian exiles were socially enraged individuals, but their constant frustration in expressing their political radicalism, or in becoming radicalized because of unresponsive circumstances sometimes drove them towards other consolations. John Scory, as we saw, was emotionally mobile between two cities - the Jerusalem of the saints and the English Jerusalem. The former invited an adjustment to and rationalization of Protestant suffering. Scory extolled at length the 'valiant' martyrs who were prepared to fight Antichrist until their bodies were burnt to ashes. 'God's Church was never in any age more blessed,' he enthused. Scory's reconciliation with adversity, however, was a qualified one. It was a compensation for the rage he felt towards 'bloody papists' and 'ravening wolves'. 'Who (I say) reckoning the number of souls of such as are so many diverse ways murdered for the word of God doth not abhor this cruel world?' he wrote. But in Scory's anxiety that there should be an alternative to persecution, abhorrence for the world could easily turn into enthusiasm. Before the end of his tract he began to indulge himself in dreams of the defeat of the enemy and the renovation of England.⁵ The rapidity with which Protestant moods could traverse the whole spectrum of

5. Scory, op.cit., B7-8.

strategic possibilities is perhaps best exemplified by Bartholomew Traheron. We have already noted Traheron's social concern for England, his warning of imminent plagues and his violent language towards the queen - perspectives, incidentally, which led him to conclusions in favour of political resistance. In his tract on the fourth chapter of Revelation, written at approximately the same time, his approach was entirely different. He was now preoccupied with a 'happy and blissful' end to our 'travails, our cross and our miseries'. 'What is long in this life?' he asked, '... Let us with patience run out the race.'⁶ In Traheron's mind the most frantic social concern could oscillate with the most complete social indifference. Moods in general must have been extraordinarily volatile, but some Protestants probably tried to keep various strategic possibilities simultaneously in their minds. John Ponet, at the close of a long range of strategic options, reminded his 'poor and afflicted' readers that in the failure of everything else they could rely on the pious 'armour' of 'penance and prayer'.⁷ And Christopher Goodman recommended a similar reliance on devotional exercises if more aggressive strategies should fail: the people could make God their 'shield, buckler, and refuge'.⁸ Even martyrdom, apparently, was

6. Traheron, An exposition of the fourth chapter of St. John's Revelation, 1557, 1558, B2-3.

7. Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., pp.124-6.

8. Goodman, op.cit., p.216.

to be regarded as an awesome privilege rather than in terms of the loss of potential rebels.⁹ Ponet and Goodman provide us with a kind of static panorama of the movement of the Protestant mind during the exile. And their continuing receptivity to policies other than the most radical ones - a receptivity forced on them by the nature of the English political situation - alligns them with those Protestants whose politics remained moderate during the exile. The difference between the Protestant radicals was not a simple one between Protestant quietists and Protestant rebels: all were mobile or potentially mobile on an axis between these two positions.

This holds true even of the Protestant radicals who became martyrs. But before we look at the position of the martyrs we should examine a little more closely the nature of the world-weariness and devotion to suffering expressed by some of the exiles. Robert Pownall may have suggested that man had been 'ordained' to be afflicted, but his work suggested not so much a thwarted, resigned or passive Protestantism as an energized Protestantism. Christian life was a battle - and not in the sense of the stale cliché of some earlier Protestant literature. 'For after a man,' he wrote, 'hath felt himself stout and valiant at the pinch, and willing to do his duty to the uttermost of his power, and that for all the injuries, incommodities, calamities and

9. Ibid, p.230; Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., p.75.

miseries of the wars, he never found himself discouraged from the faithful service of his prince, but hath always patiently and valiantly supported all hazards and troubles, encouraging continually his companions and always showing a good countenance and lusty courage - That man then knoweth how hardy he is ...¹⁰. Pownall's emphasis, though, was not on solid, measurable, social victories, but on the establishment of personal credentials and the achievement of prizes and preferment from God.¹¹ But though Pownall may have been fighting a battle for the soul, his mood in 1556, as in 1557, was clearly activist rather than passive. His work suggested at length that the Christian struggle could be compared to warfare for the commonwealth.¹² Pownall wanted to fight for heaven; a year later he wanted to fight, literally, for England. The distance between the metaphor of warfare and its actuality was not so very great.

But what of the martyrs? Pownall's suffering soldier provides us with the clue to their basic approach. Several of the martyrs were amongst the leaders of the Edwardian Church and had absorbed the new theology of Geneva and Zurich. Why did they make themselves such easy prey for Mary's clutches? The government, anxious to evade the problem rather than confront it, provided opportunities for departure or escape from prison. In

10. Pownall (trans.), A most pithy and excellent epistle, etc., op.cit., E3.

11. Ibid, E5.

12. Ibid, C6 ff.

the case of the martyr-bishops the answer lies not in the lack of an earthly sensibility, but in its very acuteness. Protestants like Ridley and Hooper were complete participants in the social paranoia that had gripped a whole generation of churchmen in the decade before Mary's accession. Their martyrdom was not a function of passive perspectives on society. Ridley believed in Edward's reign that the 'utter destruction of the whole commonwealth' was at hand because of the 'insatiable serpent' of covetousness and spoke enthusiastically of the rip-roaring insults of the king's preachers before the court.¹³ The point about the martyr-bishops is that they had enjoyed the very highest responsibility in what most of them conceived as a revolutionary Church and any surrender of revolutionary office seemed tantamount to defeat. The principle was well expressed by Hooper in Edward's reign. 'There be such offices of trust,' he wrote, 'as man for no cause may flee from it, as the bishop, parson, vicar and curate ... Such also as have places and offices of trust for the commonwealth ...'¹⁴ Hooper referred to all ecclesiastical officers, but his principle was obviously particularly relevant in the case of bishops.

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13. Ridley, *A piteous lamentation of the miserable estate of the Church of Christ in England in the time of the late revolt from the gospel*, in *The Works of Nicholas Ridley*, Ed. H. Christmas, Parker Society, Cambridge, 1841.
14. Hooper, *Later Writings*, Ed. Charles Nevison, Parker Society, Cambridge, 1852, p.168.

With the Marian Protestants one encounters a comparatively new genre of English martyr.¹⁵ In Edward's reign Antony Gilby gave a description of the earlier all-suffering, unprovoking martyr - the English equivalent to Patrick Hamilton - the 'lamb amongst wolves'. 'That innocent lamb Bilney,' wrote Gilby, '... answered with mild voice and countenance. ...I being wrongfully accused, falsely belied, opprobriously and spitefully handled, imprisoned, buffeted and condemned to the fire, yet hitherto have I not opened my mouth with one evil word against any of you.'¹⁶ Ridley's approach was different. His disputation at Oxford with the Catholics was sharp, erudite, incisive, and, in Ridley's own words, 'tumultuous'.¹⁷ In Ridley's work in general, military metaphors were recurrent. Particularly significant were his analogies between the secular bonds of the border society in which he had been raised and the kinship and fraternity of God's elect. God's martyrs and their kinsfolk, he claimed, would enjoy the same esteem in legend as the borderer and his kinsfolk who took chase after a marauding thief.¹⁸ Ridley regarded martyrdom as a 'high honour' but he strongly advised those who were not ready or able to bear martyrdom to depart into exile.¹⁹ If he had not

15. The Henrician martyr, Anne Askew, had provided an anticipation of this. See Bale, Works, op.cit., p.143.

16. Gilby, An answer, etc., op.cit., Ee5.

17. Ridley, Works, op.cit., pp.189-252.

18. Ibid, pp. 398-400.

19. Ibid, pp. 63-6.

been bishop of London, it seems quite likely that Ridley himself might have packed his bags for Strasburg or Zurich.

Once the Marian martyrs are recognized as passionate rather than passive men it becomes more understandable why martyrdom should have been a plausible option for John Knox. Martyrdom involved confrontation with religious enemies, exile an evasion, or at least a postponement of confrontation. Most of the martyr-bishops probably only chose a different option from the exiles because of their social position. This was not the case, however, with John Bradford, one of Ridley's clergy, who was quickly imprisoned and then martyred. As a London churchman Bradford may have felt a special responsibility to remain at his post (even to the extent of making a prominent appearance at the Catholic preaching at Paul's Cross). But certain factors in his record suggest the likelihood of an especially aggressive response to Catholicism. Ridley, his bishop, praised him together with Lever, Knox, and Latimer, as amongst the most vibrant and critical of the preachers of the Edwardian era. Bradford's social aggression was probably a function of an unusually acute sense of personal guilt. When clerk to Henry the eighth's Secretary to the Wars, he seems to have connived at gross speculation of public funds. This, together with an immense catalogue of probably exaggerated offences - envy, disdain, hypocrisy, eating, drinking, idleness and so on - continued to be the source of an acute sense of guilt. Alone among his English colleagues, Bradford

made a specific affirmation of his personal responsibility for the disasters that had hit England: 'Now is the greatest plague of all fallen, the want of God's word; and all these we have - yea I alone have - justly deserved.' Knox, as we have seen, was alone in publicly reproaching himself for the inadequacy of his social efforts during Edward's reign. Bradford, on the other hand, blamed himself for defects of character. But the difference between Knox's social guilt and Bradford's personal guilt was less important than the hypersensitivity of both to their record. Bradford's concerns had previously been no less social than Knox's: one writer described him as 'this mighty and prophetic spirit'. Now he energized martyrdom and applied to it the same single-minded devotion that he had previously applied to society. The notion of life as an illusory vapour and heaven as the sole reality pervaded his Marian work. Through his certainty about these truths and propagation of them he came to be regarded as the unofficial leader of the imprisoned Protestants - a professional in the art of martyrdom. The progress towards martyrdom became Bradford's new warfare, its culmination a remarkable storming of the bastion of heaven. 'O let us pray,' he wrote, 'that God would open our eyes to see his "hidden manna", "heavenly Jerusalem, the congregation of the first-born", the melody of the saints, "the tabernacle of God dwelling with men". Then should we run and become violent men and so "take the kingdom of heaven",

as it were, "by force".¹ Martyrdom was now far more than a simple glorification in suffering as Christ's servant: it was also an expression of social power. Consider Bradford's reaction to the imprisonment of the sheriff of Coventry: 'O happy day that you were made sheriff! ...When was it read that a sheriff of any city hath suffered for the Lord's sake. ...Never could you have attained to this promotion, on this sort, out of that office. How do you preach now, not only to all men, but specially to magistrates in this realm!' Suffering had here become a political act: it was an advertisement of Protestant power to England's magistrates. If Bradford had kept his distance from the authorities, if Mary's reign had continued longer, Bradford's sheriff - martyr might well have become a sheriff-rebel. Of course, English Protestants possessed scruples about rebellion, but many exiles, as we shall see, were capable of transcending these. Bradford, the suffering soldier par excellence, was hardly likely to allow any barriers to stand insurmountably in the way of his Protestant campaign.²⁰

In his frantic energy Bradford had been exceptional even among the frantic leadership of Edward's Church. His restless vigour had probably come closer than that of most English churchmen to Knox's. What, however, could be a greater contrast than Bradford's sacrificial

20. Ibid, p.59; Bradford, Writings, Ed. A.Townsend, 2 Vols., Parker Society, Cambridge, 1848-53, Vol.1, pp. 151-9; Vol.2, pp.25-30, 56; Vol.1,p.31; Vol.1, pp. 195, 242, 267, 273; Vol.2, p.148; Vol.1, p.411; Vol. 2, p.246. For details of Bradford's life see Philip F. Johnston, *The Life of John Bradford, The Manchester Martyr, 1510-1555*, unpublished. Oxford B.Litt.thesis 1963.

dedication to martyrdom and Knox's vibrant social activism in exile ? In fact, these two responses bore far more relation to each other than either did to a resigned approach to suffering. Knox hankered after confrontation, not the humdrum existence of a backwater. Shortly after Mary's accession he made his way not into exile, but to Newcastle - the centre of his Edwardian ministry and the springboard for his public activity in the Edwardian Church. Here he spoke several times about the productiveness and medicinal qualities of suffering, and its function in teaching man his own contingency. Knox, however, was obviously unhappy in his suffering. Several months after his arrival on the continent he referred pathetically to his 'dolorous pilgrimage' and to himself as a 'wilsome' man - an uncertain wayfarer, dreary in his wandering. Degradation brought Knox no glorious sense of mission, of rapport with the Almighty. Much of his time he spent persuading others in acuter states of depression than himself of God's continuing concern for the afflicted. Christ's fear that God had forsaken him was a consolation for a tempted humanity, self-reproach for atheistic feelings evidence of Christian conviction. Even Christian heroes like David and Job had spoken of God's departure, and David had prayed as if God were a stranger to his feelings. Knox's anxiety to counter this theme suggests that he himself may have been a victim to the 'death of God' mood. After all, according to Knox, the most prudent and spiritual men

could experience God's absence from their life.

At this time, as we have seen, Knox spoke of eternal consolations and of death as the only end to pain. But he was obviously unenthusiastic about ordinary suffering and a quiet, delayed and obscure death. In fact, as we shall see, only dramatic persecution and a 'fight' to the death with enemies like Bradford's might have sufficed. Only this might restore a blissful awareness of God's presence. Up to a point this would have been a logical outgrowth of Knox's history - a political restlessness and militancy virtually unparalleled amongst Protestant contemporaries. Knox desired confrontation like Bradford, but there was a problem: in 1553 the battle would end in social defeat. In the last resort Knox's political rootlessness counted for him over Bradford's political loyalty to England. He seriously considered the drama of martyrdom as an authentic solution to his current aimlessness, but he remained indecisive: he was 'not yet resolved' whether it was God's will that he should be preserved. 'But alas!' he wrote, 'I fear that yet I be not ripe, nor able to glorify Christ by my death, but what lacketh now God shall perform in his own time.' Eventually he decided not to fight the battle to a certain death, but to postpone it in the hope of a more productive outcome. 'And albeit,' he wrote, 'that I have in the beginning of this battle appeared to play the faint-hearted and feeble soldier (the cause I remit to God), yet my prayer is that I may be restored to battle again.' This hope, of course, was fulfilled and exile proved to

be a preparation for warfare rather than an evasion. It was an evasion that many Englishmen had accepted with much more equanimity. It was largely Scottishness that had made martyrdom an option at all for Knox, but it was also Scottishness that ensured that the potential martyr - the potential suffering soldier - would decide to yield to another type of soldier - the social victor.²¹

(2) The Constitutional Impasse

The Marian martyr and the Marian rebel with their common warfaring spirit were very similar types. It was probably often no more than the force of circumstance that separated their fates. For those who escaped from Mary's jurisdiction, martyrdom ceased to be a personal option, but for many it possessed a romance, a heroism that made it virtually the apex in Protestant achievement.²² Martyrdom was a kind of 'chivalry', a glamourized tournament in its public fight to the death. Some exiles continued to refer to the battle of their life, but in Protestant estimation this battle belonged in a different division from martyrdom. It was a fight against the personal anguish of losing relatives, property and a homeland; it was an occasion for personal congratulation, a test of personal calibre. But it lacked the large-scale arena of martyrdom and also the knowledge that victory was just

21. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.3, pp.126, 132, 400; 345, 347; 360, 377; 123, 140, 145; 371, 358; 154, 120.

22. The most notable example of this vogue was John Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'. John Knox appended a list of English martyrs to his 'Brief Exhortation to England' in 1558. See Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.5, pp. 523-36.

around the corner. Protestants sometimes invested suffering with the permanence of a divine ordinance, but these moods were usually only transitory. Those who spoke in these terms tended also to be irreconcilably bitter about events in England and Scotland. They were paramountly social individuals with a long heritage of rebuke of social failings. They were restless for more tangible results than eventual death and a long-term resting place with Christ. And they wanted to invest their own role with something akin to the heroism and purposiveness of martyrdom.

It was hardly surprising that some English Protestants should have looked first for this purposiveness in the constitutional action that formed so central a part of their heritage. William Turner's Foster embarked in 1554 on a journey to Mary's packed parliament. 'I must go thither and as much as lieth in me I will discharge my conscience, if God will help me,' he declared. Once there, he would promote a bill for the 'destroying of the exceeding number of wolves'. As in Crowley's fantasy in the previous reign, the staid assembly was to be enlivened by the trumpet-blasts of a prophet. At the beginning of his tract Turner wrote, 'If ye help not to kill them ... or drive them out of this land there shall be shortly such murder of sheep as was not in England these five hundred years before.' Later he advised instead, 'I would not kill them, although I know well

that some of them would kill me.' As in Edward's reign, the English Protestant just stopped short at the brink of neo-biblical carnage, but Turner's strategy still amounted to a furious chase with Catholic 'wolves'. It was a futile strategy, however. It was an atavistic attempt to impose Edwardian solutions on Marian problems, even to the extent, incredibly, of recommending a full-scale programme of further Protestant reform. And Turner himself in conclusion admitted his deep pessimism about the whole venture.²³ It was hardly surprising that by 1555 he had decided to address the nobility as an extra-parliamentary body.²⁴

Other writers with constitutional hopes probably decided that, however difficult and obstructionist Mary's parliaments might be towards the queen, the balance of power made parliamentary constitutionalism ultimately a waste of attention. If there was any value at all in approaching the problem from this angle, it was possibly better to approach it at its root - the queen. This, of course, was also to approach the problem at its most perverse and, though it implied a certain degree of faith in the queen, all agreed that Mary required a new insight if she was to escape the parliamentary constitutionalism that shackled her. It was a solution even suggested by Knox in the early depressing days of Mary's reign and, if

23. Turner, *The hunting of the Romish wolf*, op.cit., A5, E6, A3, E7.

24. In his *'New book of spiritual physic'*.

English writers were possibly blinder to Mary's fundamental defects, appeals to the sovereign were extremely sporadic.²⁵ Henry the eighth had been cloaked in the guise of a dynamic Protestant king, but even Protestant ingenuity found it difficult to rise to this feat with Mary. Towards the end of the exile, Bartholomew Traheron demanded help from Mary, but this was little more than a gesture of desperation: the royal reformer had still to be rescued from the jaws of hell.²⁶ And because of this the programme of royal constitutionalism in Mary's reign was entirely barren. Mary had first to be converted and if even this was hard to conceive as plausible, it was entirely premature to elaborate what a converted queen might do for Protestantism.

Paradoxically it was Scottish Protestants rather than English Protestants who were prepared in the 1550's to 'tarry for the magistrate'. The monolithic character of English politics tended to mean that Protestants would be unambiguously cultivated (as between 1547 and 1553) or rejected (as after 1553). In Scotland greater diversification of power meant that authority might have to adopt a greater flexibility of approach towards the Protestant sector. Before 1548 the Protestants, weak and linked to a marauding English imperialism, had antagonized the most powerful segments of the community, but in the 1550s a French imperial backlash attached to the regent Mary of

25. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.3, p.107.

26. Traheron, A warning to England, etc., op.cit.

Guise gave the Protestants a greater tactical potential. The Catholic bloc was now divided into two or more sections and Mary of Guise had to bid for Protestant support to maintain her position. In fact, the basis for concession to Protestantism was always virtually non-existent, but to foist Franco-Catholic control on the country it was important for Mary to overcome important private and patriotic loyalties.

The Congregation's final disillusionment with the Regent came only after the acquisition of the Crown Matrimonial by France and the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis released Mary to overt aggression against Protestantism. 'Because we would attempt nothing without the knowledge of the sacred authority,' wrote Knox later, '... it was concluded that by common and public supplication, we should attempt the favours, support and assistance of the Queen then Regent to a godly reformation.' This was a period of petitions and protestations to parliament and of letters to the Regent - an Indian summer of Protestant politics, with the Congregation, according to Knox, suspecting nothing of the Regent's deceit. It was a period when the Protestants 'put silence' to the preacher John Douglas because the Regent promised her assistance, and because 'in all things' they 'sought the contentment of her mind'. The Congregation hoped that Parliament - a parliament occupying 'the place of Eternal God' - might establish a 'uniform order'. They disclaimed any responsibility for disturbances arising from their

religious innovations on the grounds that they 'most humbly' sought 'all things to be reformed by an order'. The means proposed may have been orderly and constitutional, but the programme was hardly a reformist one. It was a revolutionary demand for the abrogation of all acts of parliament relating to the Church in the 'time of darkness' and for the instant deposition of the prelates and their officers. And of course, when the Regent's game eventually became apparent, these revolutionary objectives would have to be pursued by less conventional means.²⁷

This constitutional hope affected John Knox, a reminder that for all his political restlessness and opposition he was anxious to make use of orderly processes of reform.²⁸ Knox's 'Letter to the Queen Regent' in 1556 contained the usual quota of threats of everlasting damnation, but Knox diluted these, explaining them as a labour of 'love'. It was Knox's faith that God would 'compel such as were sometimes enemies to his people to fight in their cause and to promote their deliverance'. Mary was in effect invited to become a Scottish 'Deborah', a Protestant queen with a convert's zeal. Encouraged by this new strategy, Knox was even prepared to moderate the stringency of Protestant demands. It would not be possible, he explained, to suppress superstition and

27. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.3, pp.301, 312, 307, 311, 314, 310.

28. Knox's generally fruitless, but eager search for godly magistrates was a central theme of his career. The converse of Knox's savage attacks on authority was his belief in the God-like eminence of authority properly exercised. See for example Works, Vol.6, p.236.

remove Catholics from their offices overnight, but at least idolatry could be officially disclaimed and the persecuting fury of the bishops suppressed. 'Albeit ye may not suddenly do what ye would, yet shall ye not cease to do what ye may,' he advised diplomatically.²⁹

What a contrast the expanded letter of 1558 presented! In the letter of 1556 Knox expressed his faith in constitutional obedience. 'Their victory,' he wrote, 'standeth not in resisting but in suffering, as our sovereign master pronounced to his disciples, that in their patience should they possess their souls. And the same foresaw the prophet Isaiah, when he painteth all other battle to be with violence, tumult and blood-shedding, but the victory of God's people to be in quietness, silence and hope ...' This was another example of the fragility of Protestant political sentiments during the exile. It seemed an unshakable belief; in fact, it was a temporary preference. Knox, as we shall see, had already flirted with the idea of political resistance before 1556 and by 1558 he seems to have virtually jettisoned his constitutional hopes to suggest a policy of armed resistance to the nobility and commons of Scotland. The 'Addition' contained no request for public assistance from the Regent. It simply advised her of her imminent damnation - a destruction 'as the rotten wall' and a breaking 'as the breaking of a potsherd'. It was Knox and his role rather

29. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.4; pp.440, 451, 452; 434; 456; 452.

than Mary that was now paramount - Knox comparing himself to Elijah, proclaiming his personal indignation with the queen and his own personal 'quarrel' with every papist in the realm. Like its English counterpart, Scottish constitutionalism quickly revealed itself as little more than a passing option.³⁰

(3) A Deadline for the Almighty

The absurdity of constitutional action in England and its eventual futility in Scotland meant that Protestants would have to pursue other forms of political action. For the spirit of the Protestant exile was like a coiled spring straining against its compression, and seeking relief from its tension. Many Protestants realized almost immediately after Mary's accession that Protestantism's main chance in England lay in a change of regime. The surest guarantee of this was, quite simply, Mary's death. This neat solution unfortunately brought in its wake a whole spectrum of ancillary problems. It was a shibboleth of Protestant teaching that armed attack on sovereigns was one of the most heinous of crimes. Further, both until and also after the Wyatt Rebellion, there was little hope that such an attack could succeed. Scope still remained for assassination, but Protestants, especially in England, had been virtually programmed over a period of years to an aversion for any form of political

30. Ibid, pp. 433; 437. 439. 450, 453, 458-9; 458-9.

resistance. One obvious political course, however, remained. Protestants believed that God was responsible for Mary's power. If He had raised Jezebel in the first place, He might as easily take her away.

Expectations of this kind - that God would reconcile Himself to His Englishmen, and that Mary would meet a suitably sadistic end - could act as a safety-valve for enraged Protestants. 'The abominable mass,' concluded one Protestant, 'doth no more save thee from hurt than did the painting of devilish Jezebel save her from death when she was hurled headlong out at a window at the commandment of Jehu.'³¹ On the other hand, the anticipation of what might only be a long-term relief was no consolation to many Protestants. After all, Wyatt's Rebellion had ended in failure and there was no real evidence in England of remorse for the sin which had caused God to send Mary in the first place. Protestants found that they had to console themselves with the assurance that the resilience of ungodly regimes was only illusory: God had put a bridle in the mouths of tyrants so that He could stop them suddenly, as He had done with Sennacherib.³² They tended to live like John Scory in obsessive, yet worried anticipation of a speedy rescue operation by the Almighty: 'within a very little while he that shall come will come and will not tarry ...

31. John Willock?, The epistle of a banished man out of Leicestershire, Emden, 1554. See Knox, Works, op.cit.; Vol.3, pp. 259-61.

32. A letter from a banished minister of Jesus Christ unto the faithful Christian flock in England, Rouen, 1554; A7.

although he now seem to be very far away ... yet he will certainly come and deliver us. He cannot fail nor lie but will come and will not tarry. ... I say unto you (saith Christ) that he will avenge his elect and that quickly.³³

By contrast, Thomas Becon's 'Comfortable Epistle' of the same year was a model of patience. 'Remember this saying of the prophet Isaiah,' he wrote, 'In silence and hope shall your strength be. And this sentence also of Jeremiah: It is good with silence to tarry for the saving health of God. Murmur not against God, nor appoint him not his time, but patiently abide his working, referring all things to his godly pleasure and submitting your will to his blessed will.' There were already indications, however, that Becon's argument was as much with himself as with his adversaries. Becon's patience - the patience of the muted prophet - everything in the radical Protestant outlook has led us to suspect, or at least not to overvalue. 'How long, O Lord?' he asked urgently. God would 'undoubtedly come and not tarry; he would 'shortly turn'.³⁴ These imperatives were intensified in Becon's 'Humble Supplication', which amounted to a series of single-minded and cumulative demands on the Almighty. The title 'Humble' was no more than a piece of pious window-dressing. Becon wanted the religious goods delivered and he wanted them delivered

33. Scory, op.cit., A6, B5.

34. Becon, A comfortable epistle, etc., op.cit., B8; D5, B7, D4.

by God. And when God failed to act Becon began to depict Him as fallible and unreliable. God has broken His promises and Becon, like a prosecuting attorney, was ready to score points off Him. 'Thou promisest,' he wrote, 'that as many as hate Sion ... shall be confounded ... How cometh it then to pass that the wicked flourish like the green olive tree ... Thou promisest that thou wilt deliver thy flock from the hand of the wicked shepherds ... Ah good God how cometh it then to pass that ... a rabble of ravening wolves are burst into the sheepfold ..?' 'How long?' Becon asked incessantly. How long would God be angry? How long would He allow His vineyard to be rooted up? How long would Protestants remain a laughing-stock? He felt himself in confrontation with a lazy, drowsy God - a God who had to be stirred with the reproach - 'Up Lord, why sleepest thou?' Imperatives between God and His subjects were now travelling in the wrong direction, for God seemed to have violated His very nature. 'Thou callest thyself a jealous God ... Thou callest thyself a Lord ... Thou callest thyself a consuming fire ...,' wrote Becon, showing how in each case these claims had not been fulfilled. For some Protestants exile was to throw Mary Tudor's titles into question, but for Becon it even cast doubt on the titles of God. Nothing could illustrate more potently than this the degree to which Mary's accession threw conventional assumptions into a ferment, the extent to which it disrupted the Protestant

expectations built up over the previous decade. 'Art thou he that keepeth Israel?' Becon asked. 'But he neither sleepeth nor slumbereth...' was his devastating judgement.³⁵ God had proved inept and unreliable at His job and Becon was near the point of declaring Him and His politics redundant.

(4) Prophet-Assassins

The advantage of divine interventionism was that it imposed no political demands on ordinary Protestants. Jehu arrived and departed and in the process he performed a messy job on Jezebel. But God's failure to act out his role imposed new responsibilities on His prophets. They were forced to cajole and criticize Him, as Becon did, and then, when this failed, actually to appropriate His politics. It was tempting to decide that the prophet-assassin, previously possessed only by God's secret inspiration, could be nominated to his commission by the people of God. John Ponet invited the people to appeal to a 'minister of the Word of God' for the redress of their problems. The business of the minister turned out to be assassination and Ponet spoke with murderous glee of the fates of the tyrants Eglon and Sisera. Ehud had thrust a dagger into Eglon's 'fat paunch' and Jael had driven a long spiking nail with a hammer so hard into Sisera's brains that he 'never troubled Israel no more'. But then in a sudden return to political

35. Becon, A humble supplication, etc., op.cit., A6, D4, D3, A5, A6.

orthodoxy Ponet warned that the avenger would have to act unpredictably and without popular invitation: 'But note ... the text suggested not that Ehud was sent of the people to kill the king, nor that he told them what he intended; for by that means one Judas or other would have betrayed him, and so would he have been drawn, hung and quartered for his enterprise, and all his conspirators have lost both life, lands and goods for their conspiracy. Only the Scriptures saith that Ehud (being a private person) was stirred up only by the spirit of God'.

Ehud remained a private rather than a public individual; he possessed a divine insignia rather than a popular invitation card. The explanation for this seemed eminently reasonable and sensible. But was it the real explanation? Was Ponet frightened by the implications of his radicalism? The English Protestant was certainly accustomed to political order and in its randomness, its potential anarchy assassination was less organized, less programmatic than rebellion. But elsewhere in his treatise Ponet heavily stressed the right existing in many nations for any individual to dispose of a tyrant and concluded with a general principle. 'Forasmuch,' he wrote, 'as all things in every Christian commonwealth ought to be done decently and according to order and charity, I think it cannot be maintained by God's word that any private man may kill, except (where execution of just punishment upon tyrants, idolaters and traitorous governors is either by the whole state utterly neglected,

or the prince with the nobility and council conspire the subversion or alteration of their country and people) any private man have some special inward commandment of God, as Moses had to kill the Egyptians, Phinehas the lecherers, and Ehud king Eglon and such like; or be otherwise commanded or permitted by common authority upon just occasion and common necessity to kill.' The statement was cautious but the determination was clear: in certain unusual circumstances (the circumstances which in fact currently prevailed in England) the 'surprise' politics of Jehu could become a planned politics.³⁶

Knox's position was different. Not merely was political assassination more normal a feature of Scottish than of English life, but it already possessed a respectable history in the annals of Protestantism. It had rid the movement of one of its greatest enemies - Beaton, an event which Knox applauded. And the involvement of Protestantism in political revolt gave its leaders less scruples about the disruption of order than their English counterparts. But Knox with his unusual awareness of personal responsibility - an awareness which in the circumstances of the 1550s inevitably tended to become politicized - had less need than his English colleagues to tamper with God's politics. It was easier for Knox - the prophet isolate, sustained by his exceptional relationship with the Almighty - to suppose that God had vested His special licence for assassination in his own person. In 1554 he

36. Ponet, *A short treatise, etc.*, op.cit., pp.117-23, 108-12 (my italics).

informed his former congregations in England of certain secret discussions which he had had with various Swiss reformers and concluded: 'If I thought that I might have your presence and the presence of some other assured men, I would jeopard my own life to let men see what may be done with a safe conscience in these dolorous and dangerous days; but seeing that it cannot be done instantly without danger to others than to me, I will abide the time that God shall appoint.'³⁷ The most likely implication of this statement was of a prophetic leader - Knox - at the head of a small band of rebels and, presumably, assassins.

(5) The Rebellion of the Citizens and the Rebellion of the Saints

In view of its risks and difficulties, and also the fear of seeming to issue a general charter to assassination, the exiles in general tended, in their ideology at least, to bypass the subject of political assassination or, alternatively, to leave it entirely in God's hands. They began to think in terms of a more orderly, organized and collective form of resistance.

To do this, though, was to invite the support of a largely non-Protestant and secular world. William Turner posed the problem through the mouthpiece of his character, the Hunter: 'In every sitting or session commonly there are complaints of the exceeding and insufferable number of wolves, which do much more harm than the poor

37. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.3, p.235.

innocent sheep hath done ...'³⁸ Turner admitted that there were genuine issues of socio-economic concern at stake, that it was important that 'honest lovers of the commonwealth' be heard in parliament, but he was anxious at the lack of religious concern and indeed, as he argued it out in his own mind, at the absence of any awareness that religion itself was part of the commonwealth debate - that there were religious sheep as well as ordinary sheep. Of course, the argument about religion had always to some extent been carried on in secular terms: Protestants had sometimes described religion as the animator of the commonwealth. This notion acquired a new importance in the crisis of Protestantism - a crisis which occurred in the context of a community largely indifferent to Protestantism. Turner, as we have seen, began to meet his English audience on its own terms. The crisis was paramountly an English one: it was the commonwealth that was plagued by the 'Romish pox'. And Turner also began to meet his audience on its own political terms. It was to be secular agents who were to solve what was now ultimately a secular crisis. The politic body of the commonwealth, Turner claimed, could be compared to the natural body, and the 'spiritual physic' of the body politic was to be applied by its 'heads' - the nobility. Turner specifically addressed his book to a number of leading earls and lords - the heads of the whole nobility. And he

38. Turner, *The hunting of the Romish wolf*, op.cit., A5.

offered to prove his political arguments to them by 'physic' and 'natural reason'.³⁹

Whether Turner turned instinctively or consciously to the new idiom is hardly important. What is important is the appearance of a Protestant casuistry, in this case a kind of seduction by words. Religion was described ultimately as something other than itself and the political agents of religion as ultimately agents of something else. But Turner never described this political action as other than localized. Through the systematic destruction of idolatry, blocs of Protestant support in the country would be created - blocs which Turner envisaged as in collaboration rather than in conflict with the regime. The nobility were 'heads' of the commonwealth, but in relation to the monarch they were transformed into its 'eyes' and 'ears', into assistants rather than potential opponents.⁴⁰ In fact an actively Protestant nobility could not have survived in Mary Tudor's England without a violent defence of its privileges. Turner's evasion of the problem of political disobedience reflected a continuation of the old English scruples or perhaps simply tactical caution. But even more so it reflected the non-existence in England of the type of crusade for the commonwealth Turner envisaged. The creation of such a movement became Turner's priority; the issue of political rebellion could be confronted later.

39. Turner, A new book of spiritual physick, op.cit., A2-B5.

40. Ibid, C3 ff.

Turner had attempted to enforce a religious obligation through secular arguments. Other Protestant casuists tried less ambiguous methods of persuasion. These were the devotees of resistance to Spain. Turner had sensed the secular mood of the country; these Protestants entered fully into its spirit - into its anxiety about its property, its offices, its identity, its nation. And in doing so they operated within a context of sedition, conspiracy and actual rebellion. All this animated and inspired them and they complained frantically and obsessively about Spain. And though in the process Protestantism was seemingly relegated and almost forgotten, in fact it was clear to many that a successful rebellion against Spain would probably solve not merely the Protestant's patriotic anxieties, but also his immediate religious problems. One Protestant in the early months of the reign fondly imagined that the queen might require the assistance of her nobility in driving Spain out of the country. But the Wyatt rebels were less naive. For all their protestations to the contrary, their march on London was an assault on the regime, and it was the secret plan of the leaders to depose Mary and replace her with Elizabeth and Courteney. National independence was the primary objective, but in the process Protestantism would be secured.⁴¹

For all their inadequacy and failure, the political events of the early period of Mary Tudor's reign provided

41. Fletcher, op.cit., p.78.

the exiles with a springboard, if only a defective springboard, for their own inclinations to rebellion. Some Protestants advised the nobility to cease their flattery of rulers and repel the Spanish invader.⁴² Others, however, were completely specific about the implications of rebellion. Of particular importance was a tract we have already noted on several occasions - the 'Certain Questions demanded and asked by the Noble Realm of England of her True Natural Children and Subjects'. The author worked on the premise that commonwealths enjoyed primacy over their monarchs, enquiring 'whether the realm of England belong to the Queen or to her subjects'. He claimed that there was more than one type of treason: both the monarch and her realm could be the victims of treason and the monarch herself could commit treason against the commonwealth. Hence if the realm was more important than its ruler and its ruler happened to endanger the security of the realm, a simple and obvious course of action suggested itself. The writer enquired rhetorically 'whether subjects ought to look to their own safety and to the safety of the realm and to join themselves wholly together to put down such a prince as seeketh all means possible to deliver them, their lands, their goods, their wives, their children and the whole realm into the hands of Spaniards, who be must justly hated like dogs the whole world over?'⁴³

42. A Warning for England containing the horrible practices of the king of Spain in the kingdom of Naples, A3.

43. Certain questions, etc., op.cit., A3-4.

This was also the core of John Ponet's argument for Mary's deposition. 'The country and commonwealth,' he wrote, 'is a degree above the king ... commonwealths may stand well enough and flourish albeit there be no kings, but contrariwise without a commonwealth there can be no king.' Moreover, this primacy was clearly a political one: political power was vested in the whole community, which then delegated it to the officers of its choice. Power could be delegated, but it could also be withdrawn: if rulers could be appointed, they could also be deposed. There was a simple, instinctive logic about the treatment of tyrants in a community - a logic independent of biblical wisdom and shared by the Protestant ideologist with his secular audience. 'It is no private law,' wrote Ponet, 'to a few or certain people, or common to all, not written in books, but grafted in the hearts of men, not made by man, but ordained of God; which we have not learned, received or read, but have taken, sucked and drawn it out of nature; whereto we are not taught but made, not instructed but seasoned ... This law testifieth to every man's conscience that it is natural to cut away an incurable member, which (being suffered) would destroy the whole body.' Ponet had turned the old argument against rebels - that of the diseased organ - on its head, but it was a notion ingrained in the thought patterns and folk language of the English community. It provided Englishmen with an assurance that their own instincts about rebellion were natural and proper. But

they were not merely natural and proper; they were also legal - in the ordinary English sense of the term. Any ruler, Ponet claimed, who sought to betray his country to a foreign power was a traitor and ought to be punished as a traitor. After reading Ponet there was every reason for the secular conscience to be both soothed and inspired.⁴⁴

But it had first been necessary for these Protestant ideologists to sooth their own consciences. The Tudor cult of political obedience had exerted a virtual stranglehold over the English Protestant mind. Protestants who for twenty years had preached the sins of rebellion but now found themselves seduced by Wyatt and his activities had to exorcise an intellectual spell. Ponet did so by resurrecting the old classical and mediaeval constitutionalism - the notion that political power was elective and a delegation from the community. His exceptional scholarship and culture - a product of long years at Cambridge - made him singularly well equipped to do so. But ideas of this kind were also part of the intellectual stockpile of Protestants of lesser breeding: they had remained a vital undercurrent in ordinary Tudor thought and found systematic expression in theorists like Starkey and Pole. The latter's 'Pro Ecclesiasticae Unitatis Defensione' was conveniently reprinted at Strasburg in 1555 and its arguments were cited by Ponet.⁴⁵

There is plenty of evidence that those Protestants who ventured into the dangerous territory of rebellion

44. Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., pp.61, 8, 107, 107-8, 112-3.

45. Ibid, p.101.

did so only on the condition that they could provide themselves with adequate intellectual protection. And it was natural that Protestants should have looked for guidance to the Protestant literature which had always acted as their main source of support. Curiously they found that this also could provide them with a secular (or at least semi-secular) ideology for the secular rebels with whom they were concerned. An anonymous author of 1554, who in a studied insult to the queen claimed that his book was printed at Greenwich 'with the most gracious licence and privilege of God Almighty, King of heaven and earth', advised the people to armed rebellion against Spain, claiming that it was 'most lawful to stand in the defence of God's religion and of the laudable and ancient state of their country', adding 'they shall never be called magistrates of men till they show themselves worthy of that name'.⁴⁶ The author's source for these claims was Luther. In attempting to justify the resistance of the Protestant princes of the Empire against the Catholic Charles the fifth, Luther had adopted the constitutional arguments of Saxon jurists, thus abstracting the question of resistance from the sphere of theology. This was characteristic of Luther's general tendency to internalize religion and insulate it from the mainstream of secular life.⁴⁷ On the issue of

46. A faithful admonition, etc., op.cit., translator's preface, A5.

47. Hans Baron, Religion and Politics in the German Imperial Cities during the Reformation, English Historical Review, Vol52, 1937, pp. 423-4.

resistance, though, Luther entered this mainstream with a customary gusto. And his secular argument for the protection not merely of religion, but also, emphatically of national independence was now resurrected for the benefit of a contemporary Marian audience. 'It is another thing to be a rebel,' he wrote, 'than to be one of those that stand in the defence of God's true religion and of their natural country.' The validity of this assertion, he claimed, could be proved by the constitutional lawyers.⁴⁸

But Luther was exceptional amongst the handful of continental theologians who accepted the principle of political resistance. In exploring the attitudes of other Protestants the exiles were confronted not with a secular politics but with a political theology. For instance, in a preface to Luther's arguments, Philip Melanchthon had claimed that in resisting tyrants man simply enacted the judgements of God.⁴⁹ It was inevitable in any case that Protestants would search for their own biblical proof texts. They were accustomed to treating politics as a theological subject and the old theological orthodoxy in politics could only finally be disproved by theological arguments. Under this religious pressure the old casuistry began to collapse. The secular Englishman was now attacked with the rhetoric of religious obligation, not cossetted with the rhetoric of self-defence. William Turner's flush of enthusiasm for the secular momentum of English politics collapsed as he

48. A faithful admonition, etc., op.cit., D1, D4.

49. Ibid, C1.

cloaked the English nobility in the implausible guise of Hebrew kings. The nobility were to emulate 'Duke Moses', Jehoshophat - 'a good king, a good noble and gentleman' and Solomon 'as well born and as noble a man as any is this day in Europe'.⁵⁰ Turner knew that he was addressing profane patriots rather than 'lay saints', but it was inevitable that the Protestant's Protestantism would pressurize its way into the debate. It was hardly surprising that the secular core of Ponet's arguments was repeatedly threatened by biblical incursions. Ponet stressed the elective nature of kingship, the delegating and deposing power located in the community, but on some occasions he depicted rulers as the direct ordinance of God and election as no more than a recognition of God's will. The people could therefore err in their choice of ruler: the prophet had written 'They have made them a king and not through me, a prince and not through my counsel and will'. Ponet therefore tended to speak of resistance not merely in terms of the community, but also in terms of God's direct agents. 'The state of the commonwealths and policies,' he wrote, 'have been disposed and ordained by God that the heads could not (if they would) oppress the other members.' The ephors and tribunes had been ordained by God for this purpose. And a convicted monarch would suffer no ordinary English penalty, but rather the pure and terrible sentence of the Almighty. 'He shall ... commit ... oppressors and tyrants,' Ponet wrote, 'not

50. Turner, A new book of spiritual physic, op.cit., C3 ff.

to the lieutenant of the Tower or to the warden of the Fleet, but unto the gaoler of Gehenna (to be chained in the ward of eternal pain) and say "Away with these deceivers of my people to the dogs of hell. Ye were masters and not ministers. Ye were bear-baiters and not bailiffs..."⁵¹

An element in Ponet's eclecticism was undoubtedly a desire to muster every available argument for rebellion, including Catholic arguments, but there was also a feeling amongst many radicals that rebellion was a drastic and awesome undertaking which needed the very highest sanction. In Protestant approaches to the subject temerity was constantly at odds with taboo. The author of the 'Lamentation of England' had no qualms about urging militant resistance against Spain, but in dealing with Mary Tudor he turned to a biblical precedent - the defection of the ten tribes of Israel from Rehoboam - and advised his readers in rather hushed tones: 'The text saith it was the Lord's doing'. The same individuals who were to rush eagerly to man the country's bulwarks and fortresses would obviously have to check carefully on their purity and Protestantism before undertaking the ultimate offensive.⁵²

It was thus strongly tempting for Protestants to address the English political nation not in its own secular terms but from an elevated platform of godliness.

51. Ponet, *A short treatise, etc.*, op.cit., pp.104, 42, 11-2, 92-3 (my italics).

52. *The Lamentation of England*, op.cit., postscript, (unpag.).

And in their search for a theological sanction for rebellion Bullinger proved of far greater assistance to the exiles than Calvin. As we have seen, Bullinger had always displayed a quite exceptional concern for the interests and future of English Protestantism. Not surprisingly, a large contingent of English Protestants, including important individuals like Pilkington and Parkhurst, settled in Zurich during the exile. And in 1555 the Froschauer press at Zurich produced, presumably at English instigation, a glossy volume containing two works in English, one ascribed to Bullinger and the other anonymous. The anonymous work possessed a systematic and logical style very similar to Bullinger's style in the 'Decades'. And its political attitudes were radical, whilst those of the work actually attributed to Bullinger were more cautious. Several English exiles in similar circumstances chose to hide behind a cloak of anonymity. Moreover, a year earlier Bullinger had admitted to Knox that armed resistance against lawful but ungodly sovereigns was in all probability legitimate. The tract of 1555 devoted sustained attention to the role of 'inferior princes' in kingdoms: 'emperors and kings and such higher powers have ... chosen and taken these under rulers and officers, as it were, into a part of their rule...' The 'higher powers' of the Epistle to the Romans, which in orthodox Protestant theory were assumed to be monarchs or chief rulers, thus became co-extensive with the political nation. Though inferior officers owed the tenure of

their office not directly to God, but to their political superiors, their legitimate activity could not be legitimately curtailed, for God had determined the functions of their office. And these functions included not merely the resistance of all attempts by monarchs to impose idolatry and superstition, but active and violent resistance. This could be deduced from biblical example. Jehoida, for instance, had justly commanded that Queen Athalia be slain. The contemporary implication was obvious. And it seems not merely possible, but in fact eminently plausible that this was the implication accepted by Bullinger and also by leaders of the English community who had gathered around him at Zurich. In its time of greatest crisis it was not so much through Calvin, as might perhaps be expected, but through Bullinger that the Protestant 'International' rallied⁵³ to the need of English Protestantism.

The futility of a secular approach to politics became increasingly evident after the commencement of the war with France. Thereafter the political discussion was continued largely in terms of a theology of resistance and regicide. Robert Pownall, the deputy pastor at Aarau, tried to uplift his readers with the prospect of a new type of English army - a godly army which would undertake the destruction of Jezebel. 'The Lord,' Pownall

53. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.3, p.224; Bullinger?, A treatise of the cohabitation of the faithful with the unfaithful, whereunto is added a sermon made of the confessing of Christ and his gospel, Zurich, 1555, G2, G3, F8-G1.

wrote,' ...reserved some of the nobility in Israel, as Obadiah and other, who showed themselves very favourable unto his servants; so hath God likewise reserved some of the nobility of thy mother England (although they be but few in number) as shields to preserve his people from the tyranny of Antichrist in his bloody members ... Nothing doubting but that they shall find favour with Obadiah in the sight of Elijah and Jehu when as the Lord shall stir them up to overthrow the altars of Baal and to destroy his idolatrous priests with their princess Jezebel.

... Turn unto the Lord they God ... He will be thy buckler, thy spear and shield. He will be thy fortress, thy wall and bulwark. All thine enemies shall not prevail against thee. They may besiege thee, they may subtly conspire to betray thee, but all in vain. For the Lord will be thy watchman. Yea He himself will ring the alarum, sound the trumpet, strike up the drum and advance thy standard against thine adversaries, in moving thine heart into thine own defence, and assist thee in the same, as a thing lawful both by the laws of God, the laws of the land and instinct of nature. For thou art no/ so far sworn to obey as by obedience to show thyself a traitress to thine own country; neither art thou^{6/} subject to this Queen, as for her sake to withdraw for ever thy subjection from the crown of England and the rightful inheritors of the same.⁵⁴

The laws of God and of the land, the instinct of nature - this was significantly the same range of approach

54. Pownall, An admonition, etc., op.cit., pp.6-7, 14-5.

employed by Ponet a year earlier - but paramountly Pownall's tract was a manifesto of godly rebellion. Christopher Goodman's approach was similar, but nothing like a complete cleavage with the old ideologies occurred: it was still useful to offer Englishmen the occasional enticement of secular arguments. Goodman argued, for instance, that since ordinary civil laws provided for the disinheritation of fools and idiots, the same rule should apply to ungodly sovereigns. There was also the instinct of self-preservation - the law of nature universal to all men that they should actively defend themselves from danger. And in a burst of memorable nostalgia Goodman sought to resurrect the old politics and the old ideology through the saga and myth of Wyatt - Wyatt who had earned his place in heaven not merely for his defence of God's religion, but also for his protection of England and its liberties, for fighting 'with the danger of all his goods, lands and life to keep out strangers'. But in the main it was not with its secular duties but to its divine responsibilities that Goodman tried to shock the profane mind. New and sterner tactics were needed for a generation which had callously maintained Philip's wars and, in Goodman's contention, left the country open to spoliation and conquest. It was time for God's people - His 'kingly priesthood' - to face up to their awesome responsibilities - responsibilities which included the destruction of all idolaters, even royal idolaters.⁵⁵

55. Goodman, op.cit., pp. 143, 158-9, 202-7, 207-8, 184-5, and Ch.11-3 in general.

John Knox's views fitted partly but not entirely into this godly panorama. In their timing and structure they added a Scottish dimension to it. Unlike the English exile, torn between political loyalism and godly distaste, Knox entered exile with a less ambiguous attitude towards authority. England, although a second home, had not domesticated his politics. More than for Englishmen Edward the sixth's kingship had been paramountly godly kingship, not just kingship. Whilst the English exiles sorted out their emotional and intellectual problems, Knox established a Scottish lead in radical politics. In the early months of 1554 he spoke of the contemporary importance of Moses' command to the people of God that all idolaters should be put to death. It was a sentence, Knox made it clear, from which no one, not even monarchs, could claim exemption: 'all those that would draw us from God (be they Kings or Queens), being of the devil's nature, are enemies unto God, and therefore will God that in such cases we declare ourselves enemies unto them. ... we cannot keep the league betwixt him and us inviolate if we favour, follow or spare idolaters.' But having built up his case, Knox curiously proceeded to reject it: 'But now, shall some demand, What then? Shall we go and slay all idolaters? That were the office, dear brethren, of every civil magistrate within his realm. But of you is required only to avoid participation and company of their abominations...' The idea, after all, was impracticable and socially disreputable, but Knox had all but been carried away on a tide of enthusiasm for it. Instead

he entrusted the crusade to 'every civil magistrate', but if he meant by this the royal idolatress, it was surely a grotesque joke at the expense of English loyalism. More probably the reference was to lesser public officers - to the wider political nation.⁵⁶

English Protestantism began to acquire a new political ideology with remarkable rapidity - but from a Sect. It therefore acquired a Scottish ideology. In 1554 Knox enquired of Bullinger 'Whether obedience is to be rendered to a magistrate who enforces idolatry and condemns true religion; and whether those authorities who are still in military occupation of towns and fortresses are permitted to repel this ungodly violence from themselves and their friends.'⁵⁷ Knox's background was more narrowly religious, less zealously secular than that of the English exiles. He recognized the secular complaints of Englishmen; he even exploited them; but on the solemn issue of rebellion he turned to a surer source of guidance. English radicals were quick to realize the ordinary secular momentum in the English community. Knox, on the other hand, refused to accept this momentum on its own terms: his words to Bullinger amounted to a kind of romantic distortion, an attempt to cast an aura of sanctity over the shattered remnants of Wyatt's rebellion. He never completely understood the nature of his English constituency, or conceded to it, but in general his political

56. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.3, pp. 191-4.

57. Ibid, p.223.

behaviour was neither doctrinaire nor insensitive. Indeed his ideology to Scotland was something of a model of political adaptability. It was a response first to a religious and then to a secular political need. For early dissent in Scotland, as we have seen, tended to crystallize around a religious ideology, and it was only later that Scotland's rather drowsy patriotism emerged as a central issue. Whilst the Congregation pressed its religious case and concealed (perhaps even from itself) its potentially subversive core, Knox moderated his political demands. England was angrily reproached for not destroying Mary Tudor, but the Scottish nobility were simply advised that in a case of extremity they were entitled to resist their princes: they could bridle the fury of authorities and repress their folly. The model and sanction for their political responsibility existed, as Turner had claimed, in sacred history: the nobility were to be Scotland's new Josiahs, its Hezekiahs. But with the rise of a secular ideology within the Congregation this kind of political evangelism became less appropriate. And Knox, to some extent at least, seems to have recognized this. Mary of Guise's suspension, he claimed, would operate until her 'conversion to the commonwealth'. It was a conversion which Knox himself seems to have already undergone - not so much to Scotland's secular needs, which he had always been vaguely and sporadically aware of, but to the political demands which a commitment to these needs implied. Knox's fellow preacher, the former Emden exile, John Willock, referred on the same occasion to

Mary as 'an open and obstinate idolatress' and demanded her deposition on the grounds of God's own action in history against tyrants. Knox, by contrast, seems to have omitted Willock's or any other religious argument for deposition. The struggle for Scotland had added a new and secular dimension to his political experience - a dimension which even in Knox could survive without automatic reference to the Scriptures. The deposition of the Regent, the prelude to Protestant victory, was one of the most crucial moments in Knox's political career. Curiously it was also a moment of secular politics.⁵⁸

But this was far rarer an experience for Knox than for English Protestants. Generally his religious expertise found itself without a secular ideology to defer to, and even when it did, as in the early period of Mary Tudor's reign, it was comparatively slow to react. But not merely were resistance and regicide paramountly religious problems for Knox; they acquired for him a purism and extremism foreign to the English exiles. The nobility enjoyed a political commission from God, but it was a commission, Knox stressed, completely and utterly divorced from their ordinary social and legal rights: 'ye receive from your brethren honour, tribute and homage at God's commandment, not by reason of your birth and progeny (as the most part of men falsely do suppose) but

58. Knox, Works, Vol.4, p.507; Vol.1, pp.330, 399; Vol.4, pp. 285, 496-7; Vol.4, pp.487-90; Vol.1, pp. 442-3.

by reason of your office and duty ...⁵⁹ For Knox, ordinary political sense had to be wrapped up in revolutionary logic. And ultimately, in moments of fantasy, it had to bow before revolutionary logic. For Knox believed that the greatest perfection in politics was not the politics of the nobility or of the community: it was simply his own politics, prophetic politics. Thus the central theme of Knox's career recurred - the theme of his own uniquely important evangelism. Already he seems to have conceived of himself as God's personal avenger, as a prophetic assassin of tyrants.⁶⁰ And now he reserved for himself the central role in a general rebellion. In the 'Appellation' he not merely made himself the example and symbol of persecution; he also at the last cast himself as the chief architect of the counter-offensive. At the request of Elijah (Knox) the nobility were to summon a general convention of the priests of Baal - the Catholic clergy. The prophet's ritual would then be re-enacted, presumably with its bloody climax. 'Be my enemies never so many,' wrote Knox, 'and appear they never so strong and so learned, no more do I fear victory than did Elijah, being but one man against the multitude of Baal's priests.'⁶¹ By casting himself as Scotland's Elijah, Knox confirmed a faith in his political uniqueness, but his sense of the

59. Knox, Works, Vol.1, p.272. See also Vol.4, p.481.

60. See above (4).

61. Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.4, p.518.

value of his own role naturally led him to expect all roles to be in some sense reflections of his own. Other writers including Ponet and Goodman stressed the political responsibilities of the whole community, but Knox alone stressed the uniquely personal role of each individual in the destruction of idolaters and idolatry - the responsibility not merely of the 'whole body of the people' but of 'every member of the same' in accordance with his personal vocation.⁶² Knox's instincts had led him in effect to issue a general licence to political assassination. The actual nomination of God's special prophetic avengers was something, as we have seen, that English Protestants tended scrupulously to avoid. Knox had not merely nominated such avengers; he had nominated every godly individual in the community. In practical terms Knox's intention at this time was almost certainly to enlist the people en masse in a rebellion under the leadership of the nobility.⁶³ But glimmers of an intenser idealism kept illuminating the general ideology. For Knox the organized mass rebellion - the kind of politics in which the individual tended to be lost beneath the general programme, beneath the general stream of tactical concessions - was ultimately a second-best to the personalized politics of the unimpeded, uncontaminated saint. At the same time, though, it was clearly - clearly even to Knox - a more viable form of political activity.

62. Ibid, p.501.

63. Ibid, p.481, 497-8, 504, 519.

In any case ideally (ideally that is in Knox's Scottish terms) rebellion itself implied a kind of contamination, a loss of purity by God's holy people. The central premise of Knox's proposed 'Second Blast of the Trumpet' was the following: 'No manifest idolater nor notorious transgressor of God's holy precepts ought to be promoted to any public regiment, honour or dignity, in any realm, province or city that hath subjected themselves to Christ Jesus and to his blessed Evangel.

... But if either rashly they have promoted any manifest wicked person, or yet ignorantly have chosen such a one as after declareth himself unworthy of the regiment above the people of God, (and such be all idolaters and cruel persecutors,) most justly may the same men depose and punish him that inadvisedly before they did nominate, appoint and elect.'⁶⁴ We have already encountered this element of Knox's thought - his desire to institutionalize godly rule by ignoring, if necessary, ordinary laws of political succession. The proper implementation of this proposal would have rendered resistance in most normal circumstances defunct. For if purity of political selection could be established, resistance would become simply an occasional corrective - a reflection of the errors of the resisters as well as of the resisted. Knox's vision was of a new revolutionary continuum in politics, a continuum insulated from the fortuitousness

64. Ibid, p. 539 - 540.

of heredity. And curiously the more successful this revolutionary politics could be made, the more it would become a politics without rebellion.

Knox's political idealism illuminates, if in a rather exaggerated form, the cleavage between the British ideologies of the Marian exile and contemporary and earlier Protestant statements of resistance. Knox, it is true, looked for and found support for political resistance after discussions in 1554 with pastors of many of the Swiss churches. Much of this support must have come from Pierre Viret and Theodore Beza at Lausanne. These important reformers were engaged in an acrimonious doctrinal controversy with their overlords at Berne. Beza, in particular, may also have been considering the future possibility of rebellion in France. But neither spoke publicly of more than a defensive resistance by legally appointed political officials. Viret, indeed, specifically denied to the general populace a role in resistance.⁶⁵ Now these reformers and

65. Robert D. Linder, *The Political Ideas of Pierre Viret*, Geneva, 1964, pp.128-41; Robert M. Kingdon, *The First Expression of Theodore Beza's Political Ideas*, *Archiv fur Reformationgeschichte*, Vol.46, 1955.

others⁶⁶ may have helped to clear up certain intellectual problems for Knox and English Protestants who consulted them. They may indeed have helped to suggest the possibility of political resistance. But their general background and current circumstances made it virtually certain that this possibility would in any case quickly occur to many of the exiles. For these were individuals whose deep alienation in society had led to an equally deep sense of rectitude and idealism - an idealism which exploded into the world of politics. The ungodly rule in England and Scotland in the 1550s was, therefore, anathema; and the prospect of its destruction was deeply tantalizing. This was the impetus that inspired the exiles to attack the central governments of two large nation states. It was the impetus that inspired John Knox to call for Mary's murder, Robert Pownall to relish a future time when Jezebel's blood would run in the streets, a prominent Zurich source to gloat over

66. Knox knew at some stage of the 'Bekenntnis' produced by the pastors of the city of Magdeburg in 1550 in defence of armed resistance against Charles the fifth. See Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol.2, p.453. The English reformers were acquainted with Martin Butzer, who had taken refuge in England in Edward the sixth's reign, and had justified resistance as early as 1530. See Hans Baron, Calvinist Republicanism and its Historical Roots, Church History, Vol.8, 1939. Knox's main encouragement in 1554 almost certainly came from Lausanne and Zurich. Calvin offered only discouragement and the reaction of Musculus and Haller at Berne was probably similar. See Calvini Opera, xv, 125 and Wolfgang Musculus, In epistolam Apostoli Pauli ad Romanos commentarii, Basle, 1555. Ponet, however, seems to have taken up Calvin's ambiguous reference to the Ephors in the 'Institutes' and there is the possibility of a contact with Francois Hotman, who moved from Lausanne to Strasburg in this period. Hotman later became one of the leading French exponents of resistance.

the slaughter of Athalia and John Ponet to be filled with an almost sadistic venom about Mary's fate.⁶⁷ It was the impetus that led other radicals to demand the queen's deposition. And it was also the impetus behind a new involvement of the whole community in the political process - including the process of rebellion. The new criterion for political activity ceased to be established and legitimate political office, and became instead godliness and rectitude. This grew naturally out of the prophetic, idealistic scrutiny which Protestant radicals had grown used to casting on their respective governments in the period before the exile. Politics had become a kind of vocation for every individual. For reasons apparent by now some Protestants chose to translate this notion into a secular, indeed traditional, idiom. Ponet emphasized the collective power of the 'body of the commonwealth' and the author of the 'Certain Questions' vested political responsibility in the English commons.⁶⁸ Knox and Goodman were more preoccupied with God's people - with the general community of believers and their equal guardianship of God's 'tabernacle'. They also tended to stress rather than merely take for granted the political role of the people, partly no doubt because of Knox's background in 'civic' Protestantism and his special faith

67. See for instance Ponet's account of the fate of Queen Romilda. A short treatise, etc., op.cit., pp.131-2.

68. Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., pp.106-7; Certain questions, etc., op.cit., A5.

in the ordinary godly individual, but also because disillusionment with the English nobility was becoming more and more rampant.⁶⁹ But none of these writers - and each made this perfectly clear - expected a successful rebellion to be conducted under anything but noble leadership.⁷⁰ What had disappeared, though, was the old careful demarcation of political roles. The ordinary citizen, the ordinary saint was beginning to be vested with an insight, an expertise equal to that of the traditional institutions of power. In this way a momentous, if still obscure, process was being set in train - a process which would help to lay the foundations for democracy.

(6) Scotland and England: The Politics of Evangelism and the Politics of Reproach

The number of Protestants who in the course of the exile publicly announced their acceptance of a militant assault on England's regime was considerable. And they included several of the most influential and respected Protestants of their generation. The Genevan exiles seem to have been united virtually en masse on the issue.⁷¹ And we can surmise that some, if not indeed all of the leading

69. Knox, A letter addressed to the commonalty of Scotland, Works, Vol.4, pp.523-38; Goodman, op.cit., Ch.11-3.

70. Ponet, A short treatise, etc., op.cit., pp.109-10, 117; Knox, Works, op.cit., Vol4, pp.481, 497-8, 504, 519; Goodman, op.cit., pp.145, 199-201, Ch.15.

71. This becomes clear with the issue of the Geneva Bible with its subversive marginal comments in 1560.

Zurich exiles were in at least partial agreement with them. At Strasburg John Ponet, who had enjoyed a higher rank in the Edwardian Church than any other exile, produced at once the most sophisticated and the most violent of the tracts of rebellion. His views were quickly echoed by the second-in-command at Aarau, Robert Pownall. The most famous of the Wesel exiles, Bartholomew Traheron, accepted the principle of resistance. And several others who anonymously produced cogent arguments for rebellion, possibly enjoyed an equal eminence.

Within these calls for rebellion, however, existed a profound scepticism about the possibility of rebellion. Marian ideology, as we have seen, was a dialogue with its constituency, but it was also a dialogue based on distrust. Before 1553 many of the future exiles had indicted the English community for its popery, its treachery and its general misconduct in society. After 1553 the first two problems assumed crisis proportions, but whilst there was no drastic deterioration of a similar kind in social behaviour the problem acquired a new and more sinister significance for politically radical Protestants. For the uninterrupted continuation of the old life-style clearly implied the community's refusal to admit the existence of a crisis. And this meant that England was largely bereft of agents to change the current state of affairs. After 1553 dice-playing therefore tended to become not just a social but also a political crime in the eyes of many exiles. The new ideologies of

rebellion became ideologies of reproach, attempts to change the behaviour which currently made rebellion impossible. And because the first inclination of these exiles was to meet with the community in terms of their common secularism, the reproach was also initially a secular one. In the period before the exile Englishmen had sometimes been accused of violations of citizenship - of sins against the commonwealth. In the new circumstances these same sins had become tantamount to political betrayals of England. In his attempt to communicate about religion in a secular idiom, William Turner complained of a nobility obsessed with sumptuous houses, elaborate clothes, dancing, dicing, hawking and hunting - pursuits which prevented it from fulfilling its religious vocation. Ultimately, Turner suggested, he was dealing with a kind of sickness in the body of the commonwealth - a failure by the citizens and patriots to perform their duty for England.⁷² The exiles who attempted to raise a rebellion against the government's Spanish policy also drew the starkest of contrasts between the current state of social behaviour and the demands of patriotism. 'Whereof came the name of nobility?' asked John Ponet, '... was it for their lusty hawking and hunting? for their nimble dicing and cunning carding? for their fine singing and dancing? for their open bragging and swearing? ... The respect only of their virtue and love to their

72. Turner, A new book of spiritual physic, op.cit., A2-B5.

country brought them thereto. Because they revenged and delivered the oppressed people out of the hands of their governors, who abused their authority and wickedly, cruelly and tyrannously ruled over them ...⁷³

As Protestant frustration grew with the onset of the war against France, frustration at England's reluctant saviours also increased. Writers like Pownall and Goodman tended to sidestep the problem of ordinary sin, reducing all opposition to the simple category of idolatry. Pownall complained of a universal dissimulation with God - a dissimulation that prevented the enlistment of an army in England's defence. But in any case the only true remedy lay in the creation of a holy army by a repentant community. Reproach and demand had become not merely more strident in Pownall, but also more totally religious.⁷⁴ Similarly, Goodman tended to ignore the problem of ordinary self-indulgence and adopted the shock tactics of informing Englishmen that as Jezebel's assistants they were imminent candidates for hell-fire. It followed from this that their responsibility in society was to combine in a political crusade against idolatry.⁷⁵

With these later ideologies the politics of reproach began to slide into a politics of desperation. And political hope finally reached its nadir with Bartholomew

73. Ponet, *A short treatise, etc.*, op.cit., p.109.

74. Pownall, *An admonition, etc.*, op.cit., pp.4-15.

75. Goodman, op.cit., pp.147, 177-8, 207-9, 211, 215, 232.

Traheron. Traheron nurtured nostalgic memories of the days of Wyatt: 'that valiant captain and right virtuous man with the rest of that band without doubt put on armour and rose up in defence of their country, which then began to be betrayed.' If there was any fault in Wyatt's action it was not Wyatt's responsibility but the queen's: it was Mary's policy that had made the rebellion necessary. But by 1558 it had become painfully obvious to Traheron that the old enthusiasm had completely disintegrated. Comparing the nobility and commons of England and of Calais, he wrote: 'The like covetousness, the like malice and envy, the like craftiness, the like cowardice and unfaithfulness in defending their country, the like flattery, the like lechery, the like drunkenness in fleshly pleasures is found in both sorts. And the common people ... counterfeit the beastly and abominable manners of their superiors ... Thy noblemen are either stark cowards or stark fools for the most part and more meet for their effeminateness to handle a spindle than to bear a spear. The common people through poverty and continual misery are heartless, more ready to bear burdens and packs on their wretched shoulders than harness on their manly backs. What remaineth then O most miserable country?' And what indeed remained? Nothing, or so it seemed to Traheron, but a desperate leap of faith - the remarkable hope that Mary might surrender her doctrinaire

soul to Protestantism.⁷⁶

What a contrast Knox's ideology to Scotland presented! Knox was as busy as English comrades in assigning to the nobility and people their political responsibilities. And they were awesome responsibilities - the defence of Protestant brethren, the promotion of the gospel and the destruction of idolatry. In performing their duty the nobility were to regard themselves as no less than 'princes of the people', heads in the body of the commonwealth.⁷⁷ Of course if these obligations were not fulfilled, dire consequences would follow, but the English note of reproach was by and large absent in Knox. In fact, the English nobility were set up to the Scottish nobility as an object lesson in how not to behave: Knox contemptuously explained how they had completely yielded to the Spaniards and 'wicked Jezebel', how they had bowed their necks to the yoke of the devil.⁷⁸ But this as yet was only Scotland's 'mirror and glass' and in the meantime Knox could go forward less with reproaches and threats than with the evangelical optimism of a potentially successful crusader.

By 1557 John Knox found himself in the vanguard of an on-going and vibrant political movement. The English political radicals by contrast were transparently engaged

76. Traheron, A warning to England to repent, op.cit., A3, B1-3.

77. Knox, The Appellation, Works, Vol.4, pp.467-520.

78. Ibid, pp. 516-7.

in an enormous struggle against political odds. It was therefore a testimony to the idealistic heritage of Protestant radicalism in England that ideologies of rebellion made such considerable headway during the exile; that they made no further headway was a reflection of the unresponsive nature of political circumstances. But the potentiality certainly existed. For in this chapter we have seen the radical political outlook at various stages of development and each of these stages was typified by an animated and crusading spirit: even martyrdom was regarded as a kind of chivalry, an advertisement of political power. And an easy volatility existed within the same individuals between differing political possibilities - a volatility that might easily have led many more exiles to more drastic and extreme solutions. Not all the exiles were set on this political route - some were probably of a more moderate 'Anglican' disposition - but a high proportion seem to have satisfied its 'conditions of entry'. It is significant for instance that affirmations of political obedience seem to have largely ceased from the beginning of the exile, and that sentiments of this kind were usually in the service of an ulterior cause - to prove that Catholics were the true rebels.⁷⁹

79. Gracious Menewe, Pseud?, A plain subversion or turning upside down of all the arguments that the Pope-Catholics can make for the maintenance of auricular confession, with a most wholesome doctrine touching the due obedience which we owe unto civil magistrates, 1555, B5-C5; John Olde, A short description of Antiehrst unto the nobility of England, Emden, 1557?, D3-5; John Bale, A declaration of Edmund Bonner's articles, 1554, Q6, R7-S1.

With the accession of Elizabeth, Protestant ideology naturally began to revert with its customary volatility to the old political deference, but it is usually forgotten that John Aylmer's famous counter-blast to Knox contained the telling revelation that it was not Knox's attack on Mary Tudor's rule but his attack on the general government of women that was unacceptable. Aylmer found himself in bitter agreement with Knox about Mary and her government: no impartial individual, he claimed, could disagree with Knox's conclusions.⁸⁰ But soon even these provisos ceased to be respectable. In 1575, for instance, Thomas Lever decided to offer proof of his political rectitude during the exile.⁸¹ The embryo that had already been conceived in many minds and was beginning to take shape in others had now successfully been aborted. But in our preoccupation with the Tudor political continuum, the anxious and angry spirits who led Edward's Church and unsuccessfully plotted the downfall of his successor have been too easily forgotten. John Knox, by contrast, has won the garlands and the infamy always accorded to historical success. But the ideas of his English comrades were also to make a crucial impact on history. Ninety years later, in the Puritan revolt and the godly execution of Charles the first, they finally achieved their vindication.

80. Aylmer, *A harbour for faithful and true subjects*, Strasburg, 1559, B2.

81. Lever, *A treatise of the right way from danger of sin*, 1575, reprint of 1556 edition with preface, A4.

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*I hereby declare that the above thesis is my own work
and composition.*